THE YEAR OF TRAFALGAR

HENRY NEWBOLT

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Lord Nelson

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BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE AND OF THE EVENTS WHICH LED UP TO IT, WITH A COLLECTION OF THE POEMS AND BALLADS WRITTEN THEREUPON BETWEEN 1805 AND 1905

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TO

JULIAN STAFFORD CORBETT

PREFACE

THE Naval Campaign of 1805 has never yet been made the subject of a separate study in book form. This fact, however noticeable, does not, of course, prove the need for any fresh work of the kind. There are many Lives of Nelson and other historical books in which the Battle of Trafalgar and the events that led up to it fill a certain space and form an important element. If a new history is required, it will probably be supplied several times over during the present year by professional or well-qualified writers. The excuse for the appearance of the present little volume is that it aims at giving to the public something which is not very likely to be offered by anyone else, because it is the direct outcome of a personal point of view.

There are some to whom Trafalgar is one of the ever-present scenes of the past, one of the world's most poignant dramas, and Nelson a name of magic sound, a star of the first magnitude, that rose upon the earliest twilight of youth, and will burn until the dawn that puts all stars and candles out. This is, no doubt, a matter of temperament, but the temperament is not un-English and not uncommon among us: to foster it would be no small service to the Navy. But when all

has been read that can easily be procured and read—when we have passed from Southey to Beatty, from James to Clarke and M'Arthur, from Sir Harris Nicolas to Captain Mahan, and turned finally to Professor Laughton—we are still conscious of some dissatisfaction. First there is the trouble of unexplained differences. Why do we find in these authors so many irreconcilable statements of fact? and how are we to discover without immense labour upon what evidence each writer is relying? We cannot all possess or master the mass of documents known as 'The Despatches and Letters of Lord Nelson'; and even if we did so, it would be only to find that here, too, there are mistakes and inaccuracies of a serious kind, which must in turn be examined and corrected in the light of more recent evidence.

The second trouble is that Trafalgar cannot adequately be dealt with in one or two chapters; nor is it easy, in a life so crowded with splendours as that of Nelson, to make the brightest reveal its full radiance or cast its full shadow. The history of 1805 is a part which is greater than the whole: it shows England's danger at the flood, and Nelson in the plenitude of his power and inspiration. All that is necessary to a perfect drama is there: there is unity of purpose, consistency of character, continuity of action, and a completely final catastrophe. It is, in short, a fit subject for a book which should treat it fitly.

But how should this be done? What description, what eloquence, can be equal to the task? Are not description and eloquence perhaps superfluous? Are

not the lessons of 1805 plain, and the men and the events of 1805 greater and more interesting than anything which can be written about them? When this is once perceived, as it must be perceived sooner or later by anyone who thinks long of them, there will arise a desire to have not only the truth, but nothing but the truth. There are certain departments in which the natural Englishman prefers to be given the plain facts, and to supply the inferences, and still more the feeling, himself. The Battle of Trafalgar, and especially the death of Nelson, belong to this department: the facts are too strong for strong language, too great to be underlined and amplified. If they must be treated emotionally, let it be in poetry: you may sometimes sing where you must never shout.

The present volume, then, is an attempt not to 'write up' the year of Trafalgar, but to condense the evidence relating to it into as small a compass as possible, and, by making the actors and documents tell the story in their own words, to eliminate altogether the voice of the twentieth-century author. If this attempt is successful, the result will be not to supersede any of the books already in existence, but to send the reader back to the best of them: to the 'Despatches and Letters' and the volumes of the Navy Records Society for ampler details, and for a further account of Nelson to Professor Laughton's 'Life' and his 'Nelson Memorial,' narratives which stand alone for straightforward simplicity of style, as well as for accuracy and intimate knowledge of the subject. The best security which the present compilation can offer to the reader is that it is based

upon a careful study of these books, and upon information, criticism, and suggestions received from Professor Laughton, from Mr. Julian Corbett (whose work on the 'Fighting Instructions' is now in the press), and from three distinguished Naval Officers—Admiral Sir John Fisher, G.C.B., First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Wilmot Fawkes, K.C.B., and Admiral Sir Reginald Custance, K.C.M.G., to whom the thanks of the author are gratefully tendered.

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'Half a victory would but half content me.'

September 30, 1805.—'You may rely that if it is within the power of man to get at them, that it shall be done.'

'My mind is calm, and I have only to think of destroying our inveterate foe.'

October 21, 1805.—'I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty.'

'How goes the battle? How goes the day with us?'

'Is your pain great, sir?'

'Yes, but I shall live half an hour yet.'

'Partial firing continued until 4.30 p.m., when a victory having been reported to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Nelson, K.B., and Commander-in-Chief, he then died of his wound.'—*Log of the 'Victory.'*

THE YEAR OF TRAFALGAR

CHAPTER I

NETTING THE MEDITERRANEAN

It was a great game for which the pieces were set when the sun rose upon January 1, 1805. 'Never perhaps,' wrote Nelson on December 19, 1804, a week after the declaration of war by Spain—'never perhaps was Europe more critically situated than at this moment, and never was the probability of universal Monarchy more nearly being realized than in the person of the Corsican. I can see but little difference between the name of Emperor, King, or Préfet, if they perfectly obey his despotic orders. . . . Prussia is trying to be destroyed last—Spain is little better than a Province of France—Russia does nothing on the grand scale. Would to God these great Powers reflected that the boldest measures are the safest! They allow small States to fall, and to serve the enormous Power of France, without appearing to reflect that every Kingdom which is annexed to France makes their existence, as independent States, more precarious.'

Napoleon was playing for the dominion of the world. His final move, since England alone stood in his way, must be the invasion of England. But, as Froissart's Flemings said of another French invasion four hundred years before Napoleon, 'The realm of England is not so easy to be won.' Then, as now, there was one sound counter-move for an island kingdom: to take and keep the command of the sea. 'I don't say the French can't come,' said old St. Vincent; 'I only say they can't come by sea.'

So the great blockade was put in force. It began in May, 1803, and lasted nearly two and a half years. When the first day of 1805 dawned, the French fleets were all shut up in port and watched by English squadrons, whose only desire was to draw them out and lay them aboard. Vice-Admiral Gantheaume with twenty ships was blockaded in Brest by Admiral Cornwallis; Rear-Admiral Missiessy with five ships was blockaded in Rochefort by Vice-Admiral Collingwood; Vice-Admiral Villeneuve with ten ships was blockaded in Toulon by Vice-Admiral Nelson. In addition to these there was now a Spanish squadron of fifteen ships fitting out in Ferrol and Cadiz; but their commander, Admiral Gravina, was not likely to act independently. Napoleon's plan was a large and simple one. His smaller squadrons were to make their escape one by one without being brought to action, and to rendezvous at Martinique, the French arsenal in the West Indies. They or the equinoctial gales would then free Gantheaume from Cornwallis. Finally, the great combined fleet of fifty ships of the line was to come down irresistibly upon

England, and secure the undisturbed passage of the Channel for the army which had long been preparing in the huge camp at Boulogne—the 'Army of England,' Napoleon named it. Nelson's plan was equally simple, and more than equally effective. It was to follow the French wherever they went, regardless of any unavoidable disparity of force, 'the business of an English Commander-in-Chief being first to bring an Enemy's Fleet to Battle, on the most advantageous terms to himself (I mean that of laying his Ships close on board the Enemy as expeditiously as possible); and, secondly, to continue them there, without separating, until the business is decided.' He had got beyond the wish for mere victory, however glorious. His 'duty' was the annihilation of the Enemy as an effective force, at any cost to himself; and, so long as this principle is resolutely kept by his successors, it is not easy to overestimate the difficulty of invading these islands. Any enemy can invade us or starve us, if he can but 'command the whole of the avenues of the sea.' But as a recent critic has said: 'What there is left of all the navies of Europe, after a contest with England, will not have much power to command anything.'

It has been often supposed that Napoleon's object was to 'decoy' the English fleet to the West Indies in order to leave the Channel open, and that Nelson eventually 'fell into the trap.' Both statements are not only literally, but essentially, untrue. To be followed to Martinique was the last thing the French could desire. Their concentration and fitting out must be undisturbed. On the other hand, Nelson's plan of

operations was one which did not depend upon any correct or incorrect guessing at the Enemy's strategy; it was simply to go after them wherever they went and whatever they were doing, and when once he had overtaken them 'not to part without a battle.' The condition and equipment of his fleet, in spite of immense difficulties, was so indefatigably maintained, that he could reckon absolutely upon outweathering and outsailing French or Spanish ships just out of port, with fresh crews, clean copper bottoms, and the choice of time and wind.

In January, 1805, Dr. Gillespie, the physician to the Fleet, wrote to his sister that the company of the *Victory*, 'consisting of 840 men, contains only one man confined to his bed from sickness; and the other Ships (twelve of the Line) of from eighty-four to seventy-four guns, are in a similar situation as to health, though most of them have been stationed off Toulon for upwards of twenty months, during which time very few of the men or officers have had a foot on shore.' And in July, after the long chase to the West Indies, during which the French buried a thousand men, Nelson himself wrote to the Admiralty: 'The Squadron is in the most perfect health, except some symptoms of scurvy, which I hope to eradicate by bullocks and refreshments from Tetuan.' Of the condition and management of the ships themselves we shall have still more striking proof presently. Nelson's estimate of the forces at his disposal was exact in every department.

The first move was made by Admiral Missiessy, who

escaped Collingwood on January 11, with the Rochefort Squadron of five of the Line and four Frigates. He sailed for Martinique, and on February 20 attempted a small success by summoning Colonel James Wilkes Maurice to surrender the Diamond Rock, a tiny island fortress off the South coast of Martinique; Maurice, however, made a gallant defence, and held out till Villeneuve came in June. Missiessy's orders were to wait forty days for Villeneuve. When the time had expired without a sign, he returned to Europe. So far as he was concerned, the combination had broken down, and his last chance of usefulness was finally extinguished, when in the August following the *Phœnix* captured the *Didon*, who was bringing him orders for a fresh attempt at a junction.

Villeneuve was seven days later in starting. He put to sea from Toulon on January 18 with eleven of the Line and nine Frigates and Corvettes. On the 19th Nelson writes in his Diary:

'Hard gales N.W. At 3.0 p.m. the *Active* and *Seahorse* arrived at Madalena, with information that the French Fleet put to sea from Toulon yesterday. These Frigates were close to them at 10 o'clock last night, and saw one of them until 2 o'clock this morning. Unmoored and weighed. At 28 minutes past 4 made the general signal for each Ship to carry a light, and repeat signals during the night, made by the Admiral. Ran through the Passage between Biche and Sardinia at 6 o'clock. At 35 minutes past 6 burnt a blue light, and at 45 minutes past, another. At 7 the whole Fleet was clear of the Passage. Sent *Seahorse* round the Southern end of Sardinia to St. Peter's, to look out for them, but to prevent the Enemy, as much

as possible, from seeing her; and the moment Captain Boyle discovered them, to return to me. From their position when last seen, and the course they were steering, S. or S. by W., they could only be bound round the Southern end of Sardinia. At 9 p.m. bore away along that island with the following Ships—*Victory, Donegal, Superb, Canopus, Spencer, Tigre, Royal Sovereign, Leviathan, Belleisle, Conqueror, Swiftsure,* and *Active* Frigate. During the night it was squally, unsettled weather. At 48 minutes past 8, burnt a blue light; at half-past ten, down topgallant yards, and struck topgallant masts. At midnight, moderate breezes and clear. At 2 (a.m. January 20th) burnt a blue light, and at four burnt another and made more sail. At 35 minutes past 7 *Active* made the signal for a Sail; and immediately afterwards that the strange Sail was a Vessel of War, which proved to be the *Seahorse.* At 50 minutes past 7, made the signal that *Spencer* and *Leviathan* were to be a detached Squadron; delivered the Honourable Captain Stopford a letter to that effect, directing him to keep on my weather beam with them, being fast-sailing Ships, to act as occasion might require. At 55 minutes past 8, made *Active's* signal to close nearer the Admiral, and at 20 minutes past 9, made *Swiftsure's* to do the same. At 25 minutes past 9 made the general signal to "Prepare for Battle." At 25 minutes past 11 made the same signal, to "Form the established Order of Sailing in two columns," and the signal to "Keep in close Order." *Spencer* and *Leviathan* separated from this Order, to be the readier to push at any detached Ships of the Enemy. All night very hard gales from S.S.W. to S.W., which continued throughout the next day: during great part of the time we were under storm staysails.'

The hunt was up in earnest: its course is shown by the map annexed, which gives the movements of the Fleet and also of the Frigates with which Nelson systematically netted the Mediterranean. His first idea was

that the Enemy were making for Naples or Sicily; then, when that proved incorrect, that they must be aiming at Egypt. They could not, he reasoned, be going West, or they would not have lain in harbour while the wind was East, and come out when it changed to a westerly gale. They could not be intending a long voyage, for they had crowded their ships with no less than six or seven thousand troops, equipped with guns and cavalry saddles. The reasoning was good enough: he could not know that the elements had already defeated Villeneuve and driven him home again, to write a hopeless despatch to Decrès, the Minister of Marine. 'I declare to you,' it runs (in Thiers' 'History of the Consulate'), 'that Ships of the Line thus equipped, short-handed, encumbered with troops, with superannuated or bad materials, vessels which lose their masts or sails at every puff of wind, and which in fine weather are constantly engaged in repairing the damages caused by the wind, or the inexperience of their sailors, are not fit to undertake anything. I had a presentiment of this before I sailed; I have now only too painfully experienced it.' His voyage had indeed been brief. One eighty-gun ship had put into Ajaccio on the 19th, the day after going to sea; the rest were back in Toulon on the 20th. 'Buonaparte,' wrote Nelson afterwards, 'has often made his brags that our Fleet would be worn out by keeping the sea,—that his was kept in order, and increasing by staying in Port; but he now finds, I fancy, if *Emperors* hear truth, that his Fleet suffers more in one night than ours in one year.'

In the meantime the English Fleet and Frigates were

doing their work with a thoroughness that nothing could have escaped. On the 25th Nelson was in the Gulf of Cagliari, and sent the *Seahorse* to Naples; on the 28th he was off Palermo, communicating with Sir John Acton. 'You will believe my anxiety,' he had already written to him on the 25th. 'I have neither ate, drank, or slept with any comfort since last Sunday.' In a postscript he added: 'I hope the Governor of Augusta will not give up the Port to the French Fleet; but if he does I shall go in and attack them, for I consider the destruction of the Enemy's Fleet of so much consequence that I would willingly have half of mine burnt to effect their destruction. I am in a fever. God send I may find them!' On the 30th the *Seahorse* rejoined, having found all quiet at Naples. On the 31st he wrote to Sir Alexander Ball at Malta: 'I have sent *Morgiana* to look into Elba and St. Fiorenzo, then to drop a letter for me either at Madalena, St. Pierre's, or Cagliari, and proceed to Malta; *Seahorse* round Cape Corse, or through the Madalena islands, off Toulon. *Hydra* round the South end of Sardinia, or Madalena, off Toulon. *Active*, orders left at Messina, round either end of the Islands or through Bonifaccio, off Toulon. Each ordered to send letters for me to St. Pierres, Madalena, and Cagliari, and to Malta—*Termagant* to cruise off Toro fourteen days. *Phœbe* to Coron, round by Goza (Gozzo) of Candia. I shall proceed as winds or information, or the getting no information, may make me judge proper; you shall hear of me. If I return I shall call perhaps off Malta, but that must be very uncertain. Celerity in my movements may catch


NELSON'S SEARCH
in the
MEDITERRANEAN
Scale of Miles
100 0 200 400
Route of the Fleet
Frigates.
Ferrol
Coruna
R. Douro
Oporto
Lisbon
R Tagus
C. St Vincent
Cadiz
C. Trafalgar
Gibraltar
Tetuan
C. de Gata
Cartagena
Barcelona
Valencia
Olviza
Majorca
Minorca
C. San Sebastian
Marseilles
Toulon
Genoa
Corsica
Ajaccio
Madalena I.
Sardinia
Rome
Naples
Constantinople
R. Danube
C. of Palma
Pula
G. of Cagliari
Palermo
Messina
Maritimo
Sicily
Syracuse
Tunis
Algiers
Gozo
Malta
Köroni
Crete or
Candia
Gozzo
Aboukir B.
Alexandria
Tripoli

To face p. 8.

these fellows yet.' 'The same day, having detached these vessels,' he wrote to the Admiralty, 'in all directions from Tunis to Toulon, both on the Italian shore and to the Westward of Sardinia, the Fleet beat through the Faro,—a thing unprecedented in nautical history; but although the danger from the rapidity of the current was great, yet so was the object of my pursuit; and I relied with confidence on the zeal and ability of the Fleet under my command. In the evening I sent the *Phœbe* to Coron in the Morea for information, and on the 2nd of February I was off the Morea; but no intelligence could be obtained of the French Fleet. . . . On February 7th I was off Alexandria, and from the information I received from the Pro-Consul, Mr. Briggs, there can be no doubt but 600 men would, without assistance, occupy Alexandria. Three Turkish Frigates were in the Port, and not more than 300 bad Troops in the Town; indeed, nothing was less thought of than any resistance.' He turned back at once, and on reaching Malta on February 19 learned the truth about Villeneuve. His ships through all the month of bad weather had 'received no damage, and not a yard or mast sprung or crippled, or scarcely a sail split,' and the men were 'in excellent good health.' His own leave to go to England had been in his hands for months, but he kept it 'a profound *secret* in the Fleet.' As for the Enemy, he wrote to Lord Melville:

'Those gentlemen are not accustomed to a Gulf of Lyons gale, which we have buffeted for twenty-one months, and not carried away a spar. I most sincerely hope they will soon be in a state to put to sea again.

Everybody has an opinion respecting the destination of the Enemy; mine is more fully confirmed that it was Egypt: to what other country could they want to carry saddles and arms? I yet hope to meet them before I go hence. I would die ten thousand deaths rather than give up my command when the Enemy is expected every day to be at sea.

'I am, etc.,

'NELSON AND BRONTE.'

But for the present the hunt was over: Nelson returned to Sardinia, and on February 27, 'at 5.45 p.m. *Victory* came to with the best bower anchor in Pula Roads.'

CHAPTER II

THE CHASE TO THE WEST INDIES

From this time onward everything seemed to be against Nelson. 'What weather!' he wrote on February 27. 'Did you ever see such in almost any country?' He tried in vain to get out of Pula Roads. On March 2 it was at last possible to weigh, but after seven hours of heavy squalls he was driven to his anchorage again. On the 3rd exactly the same struggle was repeated, with the same result. On the 4th he got to sea, and four days afterwards arrived in the Gulf of Palma, to find more bad news awaiting him: the *Raven* sloop had been lost, with all his despatches and letters from England. 'You will suppose my misery,' he wrote to Ball; 'it is at its full, and must change.' To Lady Hamilton he sent a longer letter:

'*Victory*,
'*March 9th*, 1805.

'I do assure you, my dearest Emma, that nothing can be more miserable or unhappy than your poor Nelson. From the 19th of February we have been beating from Malta to off Palma; where I am now anchored, the wind and sea being so very contrary and bad. But I cannot help myself, and no one in the Fleet can

feel what I do: and, to mend my fate, yesterday Captain Layman arrived,—to my great surprise—not in his Brig, but in a Spanish Cartel; he having been wrecked off Cadiz, and lost all the despatches and letters. You will conceive my disappointment! It is now from November 2nd that I have had a line from England. Captain Layman says he is sure the letters are sunk, never to rise again; but as they were not thrown overboard until the Vessel struck the rock, I have much fear that they may have fallen into the hands of the Dons.

'My reports from off Toulon state the French Fleet as still in Port; but I shall ever be uneasy at not having fallen in with them. I know, my dear Emma, that it is vain to repine; but my feelings are alive to meeting those fellows, after near two years' hard service. What a time! I could not have thought it possible that I should be so long absent; unwell, and uncomfortable, in many respects. However, when I calculate upon the French Fleet's not coming to sea for this summer, I shall certainly go for dear England, and a thousand [times] dearer Merton. May Heaven bless you, my own Emma. I cannot think where Sir William Bolton is got to; he ought to have joined me before this time. I send you a trifle, for a birthday's gift. I would to God I could give you more; but I have it not. I get no Prize money worth naming; but if I have the good fortune to meet the French Fleet, I hope they will make me amends for all my anxiety; which has been, and is, indescribable.

'How is my dear Horatia? I hope you have her under your guardian wing, at Merton. May God bless her! Captain Layman is now upon his trial. I hope he will come clear with honour. I fear it was too great confidence in his own judgment that got him into the scrape; but it was impossible that any person living could have exerted himself more, when in a most trying and difficult situation.'

'*March 10th.*

'Poor Captain L. has been censured by the Court: but I have my own opinion. I sincerely pity him; and

have wrote to Lord Melville and Sir Evan Nepean, to try what can be done. Altogether I am much unhinged.'

The letter to Lord Melville is a very characteristic one, and of special interest, not only on account of its bearing on the Service and its risks and responsibilities, but because Sir Harris Nicolas relates that by reading it he was first stirred to undertake the compilation of his great 'Despatches and Letters of Lord Nelson.' It runs as follows:

'*Victory at Sea*,
'10*th March*, 1805.

'My dear Lord,

'I inclose some remarks made by Captain Layman whilst he was in Spain, after the very unfortunate loss of that fine Sloop, which your Lordship was so good as to give him the command of. Your Lordship will find the remarks flow from a most intelligent and active mind, and may be useful should any expedition take place against Cadiz; and, my dear Lord, give me leave to recommend Captain Layman to your kind protection; for notwithstanding the Court-martial has thought him deserving of censure for his running in with the land, yet, my Lord, allow me to say, that Captain Layman's misfortune was, perhaps, conceiving that other people's abilities were equal to his own, which indeed very few people's are.

'I own myself one of those who do not fear the shore, for hardly any great things are done in a small Ship by a man that is; therefore I make very great allowances for him. Indeed his station was never intended to be from the shore in the Straits: and if he did not every day risk his Sloop, he would be useless upon that station. Captain Layman has served with me in three Ships, and I am well acquainted with his bravery, zeal, judgment and activity; nor do I regret the loss of the

Raven compared to the value of Captain Layman's services, which are a National loss.

'You must, my dear Lord, forgive the warmth which I express for Captain Layman; but he is in adversity, and therefore has the more claim to my attention and regard. If I had been censured every time I have run my Ship, or Fleets under my command, into great danger, I should long ago have been *out* of the Service, and never *in* the House of Peers.

'I am, my dear Lord,

'Most faithfully, your obedient servant,

'NELSON AND BRONTE.'

All his efforts were, however, unavailing: Layman was passed over, and eventually, some ten years after, died by his own hand. Nelson was more successful in another case. He wrote to the Admiralty on March 20 that 'the gallant resistance made by the late *Arrow* and *Acheron* in Action with the Enemy, for their own defence and the protection of the Convoy under their charge, so far as I have yet been informed, is highly meritorious, and much to their credit.' The two Captains, Vincent and Farquhar, were duly court-martialled for the loss of their ships, and on the 29th Nelson, in forwarding the report on Farquhar to the Admiralty, remarks that their conduct 'very justly entitles those Commanders to their Lordships' patronage.' Both were immediately made Post-Captains: one afterwards became a Companion and the other a Knight Commander of the Bath.

Heavier troubles and anxieties were now at hand. 'The French Fleet put to sea in the night of Saturday, March 30th, and on Sunday morning the 31st at 8 o'clock they were seen by the *Active* and *Phœbe*.' The *Phœbe*

brought the news to Nelson off Toro on April 4; but in the meantime the *Active*, in fresh breezes from the W.N.W., lost sight of the Enemy. Nelson at once spread his net again: 'I have covered the Channel from Barbary to Toro (Sardinia) with Frigates and the Fleet.' His anxiety took the usual form: 'I can neither eat, drink, nor sleep.' The wind, too, was against him if he wished to go West. 'My good fortune,' he writes on the 19th, 'seems flown away. I cannot get a fair wind or even a side wind. Dead foul!—Dead foul!' The French had been reported as having been sighted going West on the 7th; Nelson prepared to follow, supposing that Ireland might be their objective. He wrote to Admiral Lord Gardner, Commander-in-Chief, Ireland, a brief, unselfish offer:

'*Victory*,
'*April 19th*, 1805.

'My dear Lord,

'If the Toulon Fleet, with that of Cadiz, is gone your road, the Ships under my command may be no unacceptable sight. If you do not want our help, tell us to go back again. I feel vexed at their slipping out of the Mediterranean, as I had marked them for my own game. However, I hope, my dear Lord, that you will now annihilate them, instead of, my dear Lord,

'Your most faithful humble servant,
'Nelson and Bronte.

On May 6 he reached Gibraltar with great difficulty. 'I believe Easterly winds have left the Mediterranean.' But now, before all the fleet had anchored, there was 'Every appearance of a Levanter coming on.' Up went the Blue Peter; the officers' linen, which had gone

ashore, was abandoned, and the Straits were passed. Nothing having been heard at Lisbon of the Enemy, it was 'generally believed that the French and Spanish Ships are gone to the West Indies'; but, wrote Nelson, 'that I don't mind if I can but get at them.' His mind seems to have been finally made up by a visit from Rear-Admiral Donald Campbell, of the Portuguese Service, who afterwards complained in a letter to him, dated September 21, 1805, of having been deprived of his command on two grounds, one of which was 'going on board your Lordship when you passed the Gut, and giving you information where the combined Fleets had gone.'

Nelson started definitely for the West Indies on May 11 with ten Sail of the Line—*Victory*, *Canopus*, *Superb*, *Spencer*, *Donegal*, *Tigre*, *Leviathan*, *Belleisle*, *Conqueror*, *Swiftsure*—and the Frigates *Decade*, *Amphion*, and *Amazon*. The Enemy had a very long start, for they passed the Straits twenty-seven days before him, and left Cadiz thirty-one days before he left St. Vincent and turned Westward. He reckoned upon gaining fourteen days in the passage, and a few more while they were delayed at Martinique; so that he hoped to save Jamaica and the sugar fleets. But the squadron was in danger of being hampered by a lame duck. The *Superb*, the most famous of the ten after the *Victory* herself, commanded by Richard Keats, Nelson's favourite Captain, was so much in need of repair that she ought to have gone to England instead of Trinidad; but Keats, like Nelson himself, would 'rather have died ten thousand deaths.' On the 8th he was thanked by the

Admiral for his determination. 'I am very much pleased with the cheerfulness with which you are determined to share the fate of the Fleet. Perhaps none of us would wish for exactly a West India trip; but the call of our Country is far superior to any consideration of self. I will take care that *Superb* shall have neighbour's fare in everything. I have wrote to the Admiralty that *Superb* would be sent home before the hurricane months.' So the old ship, which had been 'in a very weak state' eighteen months before this, and of which Nelson had written a year ago that 'her stem and the knees of her head are loose and broke—nothing but the great exertions of Captain Keats has kept her at sea this last season,' started with the rest, and was in difficulties immediately. But Captain and Admiral were worthy of each other. Keats, says Mahan, 'obtained permission not to stop when other ships did, but always to carry a press of sail; and he lashed his studding-sail booms to the yards, as the constant direction of the Trade-winds allows them to be carried steadily.' On the other side, Nelson sympathized as usual with a good officer in difficulties. He wrote to Keats—perhaps it was too delicate a matter to speak about:

'*Victory*,
'*May 19th*, 1805.

'My dear Keats,

'I am fearful that you may think that the *Superb* does not go so fast as I could wish. However that may be (for if we all went ten knots, I should not think it fast enough) yet I would have you be assured that I know and feel that the *Superb* does all which is possible for a Ship to accomplish; and I desire that you will not

fret upon the occasion. I hope, and indeed feel confident, that very soon you will help me to secure the *Majestueux*. I think we have been from Cape St. Vincent very fortunate, and shall be in the West Indies time enough to secure Jamaica, which I think is their object. Whatever may happen, believe me ever, my dear Keats,

'Your most obliged and sincere friend,

'NELSON AND BRONTE.'

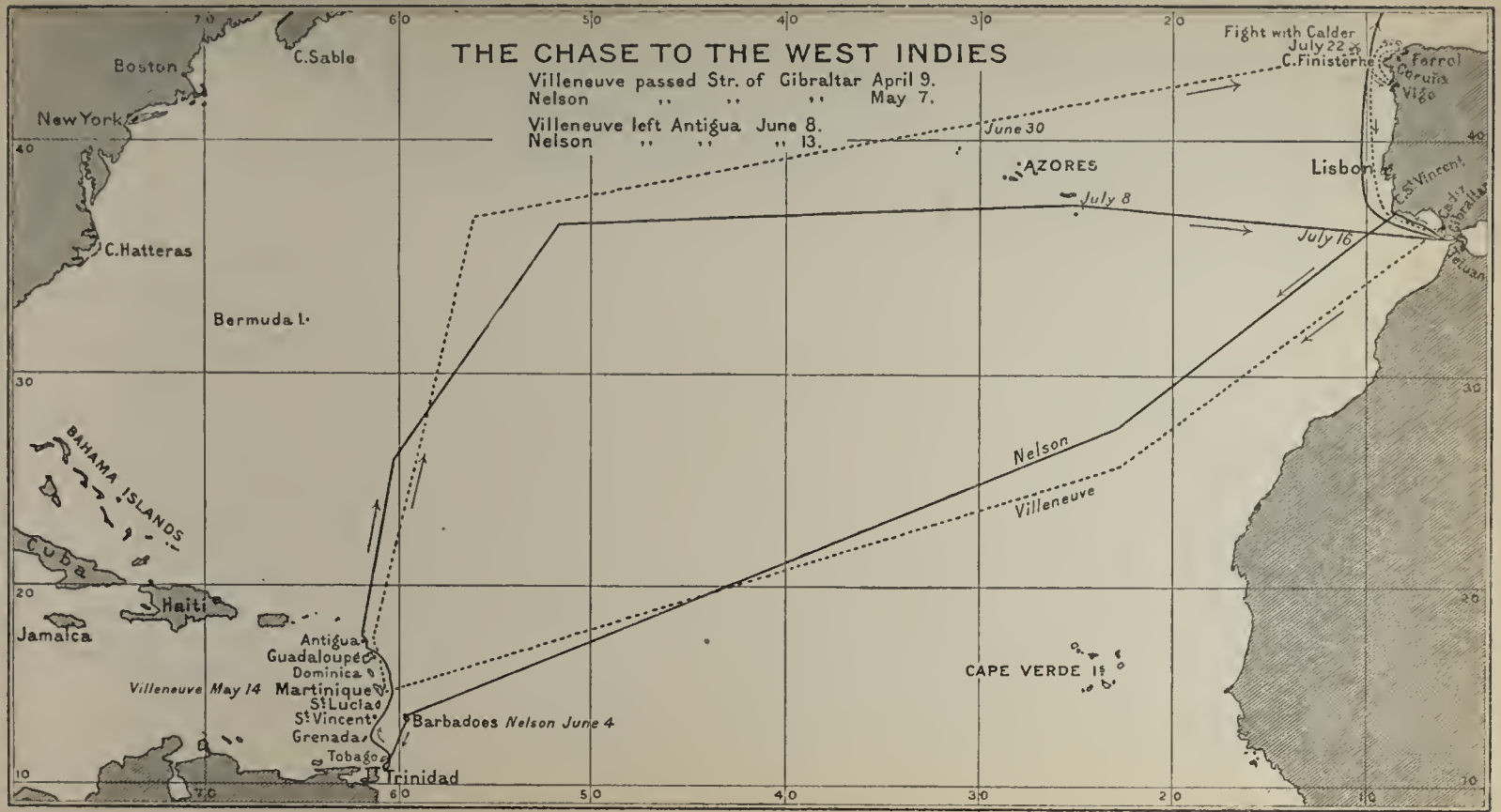
The passage was uneventful, but on the last day, June 3, the *Amphion* spoke two English merchant ships, and learnt that the French were in the West Indies. The next day Nelson reached Barbadoes, where he found the *Northumberland*, Rear-Admiral Cochrane, and was also joined by the *Spartiate*. Fate now dealt him the cruellest stroke of all: a mistaken report sent him South to Trinidad, with ships cleared for action and every hope of a great battle in the Bay of Paria; whilst all the time the French were steering North for Antigua and the homeward voyage. His own account of this, written to Lord Robert Fitzgerald, Minister at Lisbon, is as follows:

'*VICTORY at Sea*,
'*June 15th*, 1805.

'MY LORD,

'The Combined Squadrons passed to leeward of Antigua on the 8th, standing to the Northward, and when I left St. John's Road, in that Island, on the 13th, nothing had been heard of them; therefore I believe they are on their return to Europe.

'As my trip to the West Indies must have greatly interested your Lordship, I shall briefly run over the occurrences. I arrived at Barbadoes June 4th, where I found Lieutenant-General Sir William Myers, who the night before had received information from Brigadier-General Brereton at St. Lucia that twenty-eight Sail of the Enemy's Fleet had been seen to wind-


THE CHASE TO THE WEST INDIES
Villeneuve passed Str. of Gibraltar April 9.
Nelson " " " May 7.
Villeneuve left Antigua June 8.
Nelson " " " 13.
Fight with Calder July 22
C. Finisterre
Ferrol
Coruña
Vigo
June 30
AZORES
Lisbon
C. St Vincent
Gib.
Tetuan
July 8
July 16
Boston
C. Sable
New York
C. Hatteras
Bermuda I.
BAHAMA ISLANDS
Cuba
Haiti
Jamaica
Nelson
Villeneuve
Antigua
Guadaloupe
Dominica
Villeneuve May 14
Martinique
St Lucia
St Vincent
Grenada
Tobago
Barbadoes Nelson June 4
Trinidad
CAPE VERDE Is
70
60
50
40
30
20
10

To face p. 18.

ward of St. Lucia, steering to the Southward. As there was no reason to doubt this information, the General offered to embark himself with 2,000 Troops, for the relief of either Tobago or Trinidada, which were supposed to be the intended objects of the Enemy's attack. On the 6th we were off Tobago; on the 7th at Trinidada; on the 8th I received an account that the Enemy had not moved on the 4th from Port Royal, but were expected to sail that night for the attack of Grenada. On the 9th I was at Grenada, when I received a letter from General Prevost to say that the Enemy had passed Dominica on the 6th standing to the Northward, to the leeward of Antigua, and took that day a Convoy of 14 Sail of Sugar-loaded Ships, which unfortunately left St. John's in the night for England. On the 11th I was at Montserrat, and at sunset of the 12th anchored at St. John's, Antigua, to land the Troops, which was done on the morning of the 13th, and at noon I sailed in my pursuit of the Enemy; and I do not yet despair of getting up with them before they arrive at Cadiz or Toulon, to which Ports I think they are bound, or at least in time to prevent them from having a moment's superiority. I have no reason to blame Dame Fortune. If either General Brereton could not have wrote, or his look-out man had been blind, nothing could have prevented my fighting them on June 6th; but such information and from such a quarter, close to the Enemy, could not be doubted. . . .

'I am, with great respect, etc.,

'NELSON AND BRONTE.'

Villeneuve had taken the Diamond Rock on June 2, and the fourteen sugar ships. Nelson consoled himself by the reflection that he had saved Jamaica and over 200 more sugar ships. He did not know that Napoleon's combination had broken down, but he was determined to catch Villeneuve again if possible. On the 18th he was 200 leagues North of Antigua, aiming to strike the

region of the Westerly winds. On the 19th he was again comforting Keats: 'I think the *Superb* is improved in her sailing'; but he was more in need of comfort himself. On the 21st he wrote in his Private Diary: 'Midnight, nearly calm, saw three planks, which I think came from the French Fleet. Very miserable, which is very foolish.' He passed through the Azores on July 8, eight days behind Villeneuve. On July 18 he made a last despairing entry: 'Cape Spartel in sight, but no French Fleet, nor any information about them: how sorrowful this makes me, but I cannot help myself!' On the 19th he anchored in Rosia Bay, Gibraltar, having in reality outrun Villeneuve, and having also strategically defeated him. For on finding that his own course was South of Villeneuve's, who might therefore possibly be aiming at a junction with the Ferrol and Rochefort Squadrons, and even at raising the blockade of Brest, he had at once despatched the fast Brig *Curieux* to England with a warning to the Admiralty. Barham instantly sent orders for ten ships from the Channel Fleet, and five from before Rochefort, to lie in wait in Villeneuve's supposed track. The result was that on the 22nd the French Admiral was met off Cape Finisterre by Sir Robert Calder, and driven South into Vigo with the loss of two ships. The English combination had worked perfectly. Meantime, on July 20th Nelson records that: 'I went on shore for the first time since the 16th of June, 1803, and from having my foot out of the *Victory*, two years, wanting ten days.' He then sailed North, and on August 15th joined Cornwallis and the Channel Fleet,

and heard of Calder's action, upon which he next day wrote the following letter:

'*Victory*,
'*August 16th*, 1805.

'My dear Fremantle,

'I could not last night sit down to thank you for your truly kind letter, and for your large packet of newspapers, for I was in truth bewildered by the account of Sir Robert Calder's Victory, and the joy of the event; together with the hearing that *John Bull* was not content, which I am sorry for. Who can, my dear Fremantle, command all the success which our Country may wish? We have fought together (at Copenhagen—*Ed.*), and therefore well know what it is. I have had the best disposed Fleet of friends, but who can say what will be the event of a Battle? and it most sincerely grieves me, that in any of the papers it should be insinuated, that Lord Nelson could have done better. I should have fought the Enemy, so did my friend Calder; but who can say that he will be more successful than another? I only wish to stand upon my own merits, and not by comparison, one way or the other, upon the conduct of a Brother Officer. You will forgive this dissertation, but I feel upon the occasion. Is George Martin with you? If so remember me to him, kindly. I have said all you wish to Admiral Murray, and to good Captain Hardy. Dr. Scott says you remember everybody but *him*. I beg my respects to Mrs. Fremantle, and with the most sincere wishes that you may have the *Neptune* close alongside a French Three-decker,

'Believe me as ever, my dear Fremantle,
'Your most faithful and affectionate friend,
'Nelson and Bronte.'

The *Victory* was ordered home. With her went the old *Superb*—'Wants docking and a new foremast.' They anchored at Spithead on the 18th, thence to the

Motherbank, where Nelson hauled down his Flag at 9 p.m. on the 19th, and started at once for Merton. On the 20th Villeneuve ran South into Cadiz, unable to face the combination of Cornwallis' and Nelson's fleets. On the 25th Napoleon, in bitter wrath, broke up his camp at Boulogne and marched against the Austrians. The invasion was at an end; the British Admirals had beaten the 'Army of England.'

CHAPTER III

THE GATHERING OF THE EAGLES

NELSON was but 'twenty-five days, from dinner to dinner, absent from the *Victory*.' The whole of the time was passed at Merton, except some four days spent in rapid visits to London. The first of these was on August 20, a few hours only after his arrival at Merton, for Ministers could not be kept waiting. The importance they attached to Nelson's advice is shown by his humorous account of a second consultation, which took place on the 23rd:

'MERTON,
'*24th August*, 1805.

'MY DEAR KEATS,

'Many thanks for your kind letter. Nothing, I do assure you, could give me more pleasure than to have you at all times near me, for without a compliment, I believe your head is as judicious as your heart is brave, and neither, I believe, can be exceeded. Yesterday the Secretary of State (Lord Castlereagh) which is a man who has only sat one solitary day in his Office, and of course knows but little of what is passed, and indeed the Ministers were all full of the Enemy's Fleet, and as I am now set up for a *Conjuror*, and God knows they will very soon find out I am far from being one, I was asked my opinion, against my inclination, for if I make one wrong guess the charm will be

broken; but this I ventured without any fear, that if Calder got fairly close alongside their twenty-seven or twenty-eight Sail, that by the time the Enemy had beat our Fleet soundly, they would do us no harm this year. The Royal Duke (of Clarence) wrote you from Merton about yourself, I believe, but when I can see Lord Castlereagh I shall know positively what they mean to do; perhaps you may pass by Merton on your way to London; if you come by Epsom it is the nearest road to pass my door.

'Ever, my dear Keats,
'Your most faithful and obliged friend,
'NELSON AND BRONTE.'

'What they meant to do' was, of course, to send Nelson out: but there was some expectation that Sir Robert Calder might have a chance to retrieve himself, and Nelson, though it would take away his own coveted opportunity, grudged nothing to so unfortunate a Commander. 'If I do not go forth *very very* soon,' he wrote on the 29th, 'which I hope Calder's victory (which I am most anxiously expecting) will render unnecessary, I will sit with pleasure for a drawing.' The expected news, however, did not come, and on the 31st Nelson wrote to Admiral Murray: '*Victory* is ordered to sea: whether my Flag goes out in her I have not heard. I am satisfied you may hoist your Flag whenever you please; and I do assure you that it will always give me pleasure to see your Flag fly in any Fleet under my command.' Murray was not destined to such good fortune; but on the same day Nelson promised to intercede for the employment of another old friend, Sir Edward Berry, and his application was successful, as we shall see hereafter.

The moment for action was not long delayed. On September 2 Captain Blackwood, of the *Euryalus*, arrived at the Admiralty with news that the Combined Fleets had put into Cadiz. Calder's day was over, and Blackwood, realizing this, had called at Merton at five o'clock the same morning on his way to London. Nelson, who was already up and dressed, exclaimed on seeing him: 'I am sure you bring me news of the French and Spanish Fleets, and I think I shall yet have to beat them!' He followed Blackwood to town, and on one of the two following days was definitely ordered to resume his Command, from which he had merely been absent on leave. According to Clarke and M'Arthur, 'Lord Barham, the First Lord of the Admiralty, is said to have placed a List of the Navy in his hands, desiring him to choose his own Officers, to which he replied, returning the list: "Choose yourself, my Lord, the same spirit actuates the whole profession; you cannot choose wrong." Lord Barham then desired that the Admiral would, without reserve, dictate to the Private Secretary, Mr. Thomson, such Ships as he wished, in addition to his present Squadron, and that they should follow him at short intervals, as soon as each was ready. "Have no scruple, Lord Nelson, there is my Secretary, I will leave the room, give your orders to him, and rely on it they shall be implicitly obeyed by me."' The Admiralty certainly knew how to use the instrument in their hands.

On September 5 Nelson writes to his cousin, Mr. Rolfe: '*All my things* are this day going off for Portsmouth'; and on the following day to Mr. Davison:

'I hope my absence will not be long, and that I shall soon meet the Combined Fleets with a force sufficient to do the job well; for half a victory would but half content me. But I do not believe the Admiralty can give me a force within fifteen or sixteen Sail of the Line of the Enemy; and therefore if every Ship took her opponent, we should have to contend with a fresh Fleet of fifteen or sixteen Sail of the Line. But I will do my best; and I hope God Almighty will go with me. I have much to lose, but little to gain; and I go because it's right, and I will serve the Country faithfully.' On the 7th he wrote to Collingwood: 'I shall be with you in a very few days, and I hope you will remain Second in Command.' On the 11th he ordered Captain Durham to join the *Victory* at St. Helen's in the *Defiance*, and to be in readiness to put to sea. And now he had but to say good-bye. His own record of this is sufficient:

'PRIVATE DIARY.

'*Friday Night,*
'*13th September.*

'At half-past ten drove from dear, dear Merton, where I left all which I hold dear in this world, to go to serve my King and Country. May the Great God whom I adore enable me to fulfil the expectations of my Country; and if it is His good pleasure that I should return, my thanks will never cease being offered up to the Throne of His Mercy. If it is His good providence to cut short my days upon earth, I bow with the greatest submission, relying that He will protect those so dear to me, that I may leave behind.—His will be done: Amen, Amen, Amen.'

His last act before saying farewell to Lady Hamilton had been to pray over his sleeping Horatia. The entry

in the Diary appears to have been written at some point on the long night drive to Portsmouth, where he reached the George Inn at six o'clock in the morning. His embarkation is described by Southey as a scene of great enthusiasm: 'A crowd collected in his train, pressing forward to obtain sight of his face; many were in tears, and many knelt down before him and blessed him as he passed. . . . They pressed upon the parapet to gaze after him when his barge pushed off, and he was returning their cheers by waving his hat. The sentinels, who endeavoured to prevent them from trespassing upon this ground, were wedged among the crowd; and an officer, who not very prudently upon such an occasion, ordered them to drive the people down with their bayonets, was compelled speedily to retreat.' To Nelson's ear there was a new, perhaps an ominous, note in this acclamation. He said to Hardy: 'I had their huzzas before; I have their hearts now.'

Mr. Canning and Mr. Rose accompanied him on board, and dined with him while the ship was preparing for sea. The *Victory's* Log records: 'September 14. At 11.30 a.m. hoisted the Flag of the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Nelson, K.B. Sunday 15th 8 a.m. weighed and made sail to the S.S.E. *Euryalus* in company.'

Nelson's last orders on leaving England were for the *Royal Sovereign*, *Defiance*, and *Agamemnon*, not yet ready for sea, to follow the moment they were complete; the *Renommée* and *Melpomene* Frigates to proceed to Malta with money, and the Frigate '*L'Aimable* will proceed with the Lisbon Convoy, and join me on my

Rendezvous the moment the service is performed.' The Rendezvous was also given to the *Thunderer*, as follows:

'*Victory at Sea*,
'Secret Rendezvous, *15th September*, 1805.

'Off Cape St. Vincent, where a Frigate will be stationed to give information where I am to be found. In the event of not meeting the said Frigate, after cruizing twenty-four hours, the Ships in search of me must call off Cape St. Mary's and Cadiz, approaching them with the utmost caution.

'Nelson and Bronte.'

The *Thunderer*, however, with the *Ajax*, joined the *Victory* off the Lizard on the 18th. While detained off Plymouth the day before Nelson had sent ashore the following letter:

'*Victory, off Plymouth, September 17th,*
'*nine o'clock in the morning. Blowing*
'*fresh at W.S.W. Dead foul wind.*

'I sent, my own dearest Emma, a letter for you, last night, in a Torbay Boat, and gave the man a guinea to put it in the Post Office. We have had a nasty blowing night and it looks very dirty. I am now signalising the Ships at Plymouth to join me; but I rather doubt their ability to get to sea. However, I have got clear of Portland and have Cawsand Bay and Torbay under the lee. I intreat, my dear Emma, that you will cheer up; and we will look forward to many, many happy years, and be surrounded by our children's children. God Almighty can, when He pleases, remove the impediment. My heart and soul is with you and Horatia. I got this line ready in case a Boat should get alongside.

'For ever, ever, I am yours, most devotedly,

'Nelson and Bronte.'

On the 28th the voyage ended:

'PRIVATE DIARY.

'*Saturday*,
'*September 28th*, 1805.

'Fresh breezes at N.N.W. At daylight bore up and made sail. At nine saw the *Etna* cruising. At noon saw eighteen Sail. Nearly calm. In the evening joined the Fleet under Vice-Admiral Collingwood. Saw the Enemy's Fleet in Cadiz, amounting to thirty-five or thirty-six Sail of the Line.'

On Sunday, September 29, which was Nelson's forty-sixth birthday, he was able to communicate with the Fleet. 'I believe,' he wrote on the 30th to Lady Hamilton, 'my arrival was most welcome, not only to the Commander of the Fleet, but also to every individual in it; and when I came to explain to them the "*Nelson touch*," it was like an electric shock. Some shed tears, all approved—"It was new—it was singular—it was simple!" and, from Admirals downwards, it was repeated—"It must succeed, if ever they will allow us to get at them! You are, my Lord, surrounded by friends whom you inspire with confidence."' In another letter to an unknown correspondent, printed in the fifteenth volume of the *Naval Chronicle*, he writes on October 3: 'The reception I met with on joining the Fleet caused the sweetest sensation of my life. The Officers who came on board to welcome my return, forgot my rank as Commander-in-Chief in the enthusiasm with which they greeted me. As soon as these emotions were past, I laid before them the Plan I had previously arranged for attacking the Enemy; and it was not only my pleasure to find it generally

approved, but clearly perceived and understood.' The Plan thus referred to, and spoken of as the '*Nelson touch*' was afterwards formally issued to the Captains in a Secret Memorandum on October 9. This famous document is here given as printed by Sir Harris Nicolas from the 'autograph draught in the possession of Vice-Admiral Sir George Mundy, K.C.B., except the words in square brackets, which were added by Mr. Scott, Lord Nelson's Secretary; and the Original, issued to Captain Hope, of the *Defence*, now (1846) in the possession of his son, Captain Hope, R.N.' The words in italics and in round brackets were originally written by Lord Nelson, but deleted in favour of those which follow them.

'SECRET MEMORANDUM.

'*VICTORY, off Cadiz,*
'*9th October*, 1805.

Thinking it almost impossible to bring a Fleet of forty Sail of the Line into a Line of Battle in variable winds, thick weather, and other circumstances which must occur, without such a loss of time that the opportunity would probably be lost of bringing the Enemy to Battle in such a manner as to make the business decisive, I have therefore made up my mind to keep the Fleet in that position of sailing (with the exception of the First and Second in Command), that the Order of Sailing is to be the Order of Battle, placing the Fleet in two Lines of sixteen Ships each, with an Advanced Squadron of eight of the fastest sailing Two-decked Ships, [which] will always make, if wanted, a Line of twenty-four Sail, on whichever Line the Commander-in-Chief may direct.

'The Second in Command will (*in fact command his*

Line and) after my intentions are made known to him, have the entire direction of his Line to make the attack upon the Enemy, and to follow up the blow until they are captured or destroyed.

'If the Enemy's Fleet should be seen to Windward in Line of Battle, and that the two Lines and the Advanced Squadron can fetch them (*I shall suppose them forty-six Sail in the Line of Battle*) they will probably be so extended that their Van could not succour their Rear.

'I should therefore probably make (*Your*) the Second in Command's signal to lead through, about their twelfth Ship from their Rear, (or wherever (*You*) he could fetch, if not able to get so far advanced); my Line would lead through about their Centre, and the Advanced Squadron to cut two or three or four Ships ahead of their Centre, so as to ensure getting at their Commander-in-Chief, on whom every effort must be made to capture.

'The whole impression of the British Fleet must be to overpower from two or three Ships ahead of their Commander-in-Chief, supposed to be in the Centre, to the Rear of their Fleet. I will suppose twenty Sail of the Enemy's Line to be untouched, it must be some time before they could perform a manœuvre to bring their force compact to attack any part of the British Fleet engaged, or to succour their own Ships, which indeed would be impossible without mixing with the Ships engaged. (Mr. Scott here added a reference to the following words written by Lord Nelson in the upper margin of the paper—"the Enemy's Fleet is supposed to consist of 46 Sail of the Line, British Fleet of 40. If either is less, only a proportionate number of Enemy's Ships are to be cut off; B. to be ¼ superior to the E. cut off.")

'Something must be left to chance; nothing is sure in a Sea Fight beyond all others. Shot will carry away the masts and yards of friends as well as foes; but I look with confidence to a Victory before the Van of the Enemy could succour their (*friends*) Rear, and then

that the British Fleet would most of them be ready to receive their twenty Sail of the Line, or to pursue them, should they endeavour to make off.

'If the Van of the Enemy tacks, the Captured Ships must run to leeward of the British Fleet; if the Enemy wears, the British must place themselves between the Enemy and the Captured, and disabled British Ships; and should the enemy close, I have no fears as to the result.

'The Second in Command will in all possible things direct the movements of his Line, by keeping them as compact as the nature of the circumstances will admit. Captains are to look to their particular Line as their rallying point. But, in case Signals can neither be seen or perfectly understood, no Captain can do very wrong if he places his Ship alongside that of an Enemy.

'Of the intended attack from to windward, the Enemy in Line of Battle ready to receive an attack.

B

E

'The divisions of the British Fleet will be brought nearly within gunshot of the Enemy's Centre. The signal will most probably then be made for the Lee Line to bear up together, to set all their sails, even steering sails, (in the upper margin of the paper, with a reference by Lord Nelson to this passage, are the words —"*Vide* instructions for Signal, yellow with blue flag, Page 17, Eighth flag, Signal Book, with reference to Appendix") in order to get as quickly as possible to the Enemy's Line, and to cut through, beginning from the 12 Ship from the Enemy's Rear. Some Ships may not get through their exact place, but they will always be at hand to assist their friends; and if any are thrown

round the Rear of the Enemy, they will effectually complete the business of twelve Sail of the Enemy.

'Should the enemy wear together, or bear up and sail large, still the twelve Ships composing, in the first position, the Enemy's Rear, are to be [the] object of attack of the Lee Line, unless otherwise directed from the Commander-in-Chief, which is scarcely to be expected, as the entire management of the Lee Line, after the intentions of the Commander-in-Chief is [are] signified, is intended to be left to the judgment of the Admiral commanding that Line.

'The remainder of the Enemy's Fleet, 34 Sail, are to be left to the management of the Commander-in-Chief, who will endeavour to take care that the movements of the Second in Command are as little interrupted as is possible.

'NELSON AND BRONTE.'

To the Copy signed by Lord Nelson and delivered to Captain Hope of the *Defence* was added: 'N.B. When the *Defence* quits the Fleet for England you are to return this Secret Memorandum to the *Victory*.'

To this document we shall return again when we come to discuss the actual tactics of Trafalgar. In the meantime there are one or two points which may be noted. A copy of the Memorandum exists, in a clerk's hand, bearing the date October 10; and though Nelson's Diary and a letter to Collingwood place it beyond doubt that the 9th was in fact the date of issue, the entry in the Diary, as given in Dr. Beatty's Narrative, while settling this, raises another question. 'Wednesday, October 9th,' it runs, 'sent Admiral Collingwood the Nelson truth.' It seems strange that Beatty should have misheard a phrase so striking and so often repeated; but it is still more incredible, in view of the letter to

Lady Hamilton already quoted (p. 29), that the word 'truth' should have been actually written by Nelson.

His letter to Collingwood was as follows:

'*Victory*,
'*October 9th*, 1805.

'My dear Coll.,

'I send you Captain Blackwood's letter; and as I hope *Weazle* has joined, he will have five Frigates and a Brig: they surely cannot escape us. I wish we could get a fine day, and clear our Transports, at least of the bread, and by that time water will come. *Niger* is with the Transports. *Sovereign's* cables can go into the *Malabar*. I shall be glad to see you mounted in her.

'I send you my Plan of Attack, as far as a man dare venture to guess at the very uncertain position the Enemy may be found in. But, my dear friend, it is to place you perfectly at ease respecting my intentions, and to give full scope to your judgment for carrying them into effect. We can, my dear Coll., have no little jealousies. We have only one great object in view, that of annihilating our Enemies, and getting a glorious Peace for our Country. No man has more confidence in another than I have in you: and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend,

'Nelson and Bronte.'

This is in effect an invitation to his Second in Command, in the kindliest and most generous terms, to reflect during the interval before action on the full meaning and possibilities contained in the Memorandum. That he did so to some purpose was shown by his handling of the lee division in the attack: but there is probably more in Nelson's Plan than has ever yet been got out of it. A distinguished living Admiral has said

that 'the simplicity and scope of that order have never been sufficiently appreciated,' and it is certain that the more closely it is studied the more profound will appear the knowledge of fundamental principles which dictated it. It is, of course, well known that Nelson was not only an intuitive, but a learned tactician. 'Of Clerk's Treatise on Naval Tactics,' says Admiral Ekins, 'Lord Nelson was very fond, and frequently, at his leisure, would desire his Chaplain, Mr. Scott, to read a little to him about the *wild geese;* to flocks of which the figures of ships are thought to have a resemblance.' It cannot be doubted that Clerk of Eldin's famous diagrams are entitled to some share in the history of the Trafalgar attack.

Meanwhile 'the Enemy,' Nelson writes on the 3rd, 'are still in Port, but something must be immediately done to provoke or lure them to a Battle.' He did not know that Villeneuve had received orders on the 28th to put to sea, and was preparing to do so. On the 5th he was better informed, and wrote to Lord Barham that 'the French and Spanish Ships have taken the Troops on board, which had been landed on their arrival, and it is said that they mean to sail the first fresh Levant wind. . . . I am most anxious for the arrival of Frigates. . . . I have twenty-three Sail with me, and should they come out I shall immediately bring them to Battle. But although I should not doubt of spoiling any voyage they may attempt, yet I hope for the arrival of the Ships from England, that as an Enemy's Fleet they may be annihilated.'

This question of a sufficient force was becoming a

pressing anxiety. On the same day Nelson wrote to Castlereagh: 'I have only two Frigates to watch them, and not one with the Fleet. I am most exceedingly anxious for more *eyes*, and hope the Admiralty are hastening them to me. The last Fleet was lost to me for want of Frigates: God forbid this should.' To Marsden he wrote that he needed 'never less than eight Frigates and three good fast sailing Brigs' to watch Cadiz; and there was besides the work of carrying Transports out and in, convoying merchantmen, and carrying the money to the Mediterranean. As for Ships of the Line, he wrote on the 6th to Mr. Rose of the expected reinforcing squadron: 'I am *very very very* anxious for its arrival, for the thing will be done if a few more days elapse; and I want for the sake of our Country that it should be done so effectually as to have nothing to wish for; and what will signify the force the day after the Battle? It is as Mr. Pitt knows, annihilation that the Country wants, and not merely a splendid victory of twenty-three to thirty-six,—honourable to the parties concerned, but absolutely useless in the extended scale to bring Buonaparte to his marrow bones: numbers can only annihilate.'

Yet in this dearth of Ships there was still one sacrifice he could not refuse to make. He was commissioned by Lord Barham to offer Sir Robert Calder an inquiry by Court-martial. It was accepted, Sir Robert thinking 'that he can clearly prove that it was not in his power to bring the Combined Squadrons again to Battle.' He was, accordingly, to go home immediately, and he 'felt so much even at the idea of being removed from

his own Ship, which he commanded, in the face of the Fleet,' that Nelson disobeyed both the suggestions of prudence and the orders of the Admiralty, and allowed him to go home in the *Prince of Wales*, a ninety-gun ship which could ill be spared. 'But I trust,' wrote Nelson, 'that I shall be considered to have done right as a man, and to a Brother Officer in affliction—my heart could not stand it, and so the thing must rest. I shall submit to the wisdom of the Board to censure me or not, as to them may seem best for the Service; I shall bow with all due respect to their decision.'

Reinforcements were now at hand. On the 7th the *Defiance* joined from Portsmouth and the *Amphion* Frigate from Lisbon. On the 8th the *Royal Sovereign* arrived from England and the *Naiad* Frigate from Gibraltar. The latter, with the *Pickle* Schooner, which had joined on the 1st, was sent to keep watch under Blackwood. On the 10th the *Belleisle* joined from England; also the *Renommée* Frigate and the *Confounder* gun-brig; but the latter was sent with the *Etna* bomb-vessel into Gibraltar to refit. Admiral Louis was already there for the same purpose, with the *Queen*, *Canopus*, *Spencer*, *Zealous*, *Tigre*, and *Endymion*, none of whom returned in time for the battle. On the 13th the *Agamemnon* and the Frigate *L'Aimable* joined, and made no small stir in the fleet. 'When the *Agamemnon* was signalled,' says Nicolas, 'Lord Nelson rubbed his hands, and exclaimed with glee: "Here comes Berry; now we shall have a Battle!"' Sir Edward Berry was indeed the stormy-petrel of the English fleet, for, besides fights innumerable between single ships, he had already been

in seven general actions, and was yet to see two more—Trafalgar and St. Domingo. He had left England on October 2, and when eight days out the *Agamemnon* and *L'Aimable* were chased and all but taken by the Rochefort Squadron. Sir Edward's report gives a good picture of the risks run by single ships in making their way out to join their fleets, and of the means adopted in such extremities by first-rate Captains:

'My Lord,

'This morning, at half-past three, Cape Finisterre bearing S. 70 W., distance 20 leagues, I discovered eight Sail to windward. At four one of them bore down towards the *Agamemnon*. I immediately made the Private Night-signal to her, which was not answered. I kept steering my course, S. by W., full and by, all sail set, except studding-sails. At daylight I made the Private Signal, which was not answered. The Ship that bore down to us I soon made out to be a Three-decker, with five Ships of the Line, two Frigates, and a Brig, evidently French. The Three-decker was within gunshot of us at daybreak, and crowded all sail to get alongside of us, as did an eighty-gun ship on our lee quarter. I ordered all the water on the lower decks (there being a butt before the breast of every gun) to be started, and the casks thrown overboard, to be clear for battle.

'At 9.0 a.m. I had the satisfaction to perceive that we gained from the Three-decker, but the eighty-gun Ship gained on the *Agamemnon*. I was determined not to keep away, and I could not tack without the certainty of a broadside from the Three-decker, and being raked by the eighty-gun Ship when in stays. I therefore kept the Ship steady to her course, furling the top-gallant sails, and hauling down the staysails in the squalls, and setting them occasionally.

'At 10 the maintop-gallant sail was carried away.

I then let fly the top-gallant sheets, and fired guns until it was bent. The eighty-gun Ship still gained on us. I ordered the weather quarter boat to be cut away, and ran out the stern-chasers. At eleven the French Admiral relinquished the chase, bore up, and called in the eighty-gun Ship, at which time she was within random shot of us. I immediately hoisted the colours and shortened sail. The Enemy's squadron also hoisted English colours. During the chase we ran per log seventy miles. Perceiving a Frigate to leeward, evidently English, kept No. 5 flying, and fired guns repeatedly.

'I feel it my duty to express to your Lordship my approbation of the exemplary conduct of every Officer and individual in the Ship; but it would be injustice to the First Lieutenant, Mr. Hugh Cook, not to bear testimony to his very judicious conduct and most able counsel, to whom I ascribe the saving of His Majesty's Ship in this retreat.

'In the afternoon I interchanged signals with His Majesty's Ship, *L'Aimable*, the Frigate to leeward, and in the evening communicated with the Hon. Captain Bouverie. He informed me that he had, some days ago, despatched a Sloop to the Hon. Admiral Cornwallis, and to England, with the intelligence of the Rochefort Squadron being out. I therefore deemed it unnecessary to interfere with his former orders.

'I have, etc.,

'E. Berry, *Captain*.'

Captain Duncombe Pleydell Bouverie, of *L'Aimable*, made an equally bold and skilful escape. A description of it by a child under twelve, serving as volunteer, or probationary midshipman, on board the Frigate, forms a not uninteresting complement to the great Captain's letter. It is copied from one of a series in the possession of the second Earl of Radnor:

'*H.M. Ship L'Aimable*,
'*October 15th*, 1805.

'Dear Mother,

'I hope you are all well at home and I am sure will be very glad to hear from me, but you were very near losing me the 10th of this month, for we were chaced by the French Squadron and were very near being come up with, but we cut away two of our boats and one anchor and hove two or three hundred shot overboard. There were nine in number, we saw them about nine o'clock in the morning, and we tacked ship and went after them, but we soon found them out to be the wrong sort. H.M. Ship *Agamemnon* was chaced the day before from four o'clock, and was within Pistol shot of them, she discovered six line of battle ships and one three decked ship. We thought her to be a french ship, she was so far to windward that had she been a french ship we could not have escaped her. She began to fire a great number of guns when we first saw the squadron, to alarm us and our convoy. We made signal to our convoy that an Enemy was in sight. They all bore up for our Convoy but one 74 which chaced us and came up with us very fast. We were so deep we could not sail until we staved 9 butts of water and pumped it out, and cut the boats adrift. Besides all, there was a very heavy squall came, and we had all sails set [and] were very near going down. She laid down on her beam ends for several minutes. We are all jolly and hearty thank God, but I believe the convoy are taken, though we saved ourselves. We was obliged to run for it. We depended on our sailing, she is a famous ship for sailing, not many ships can come up with her. We have had a gale of wind that Blew hard enough only to permit us to carry two topsails close reefed, and a terrible heavy sea on. I have not been sick but one day that I dined in the Gun-room where She rolled about very much. Captain Bouverie would have run the ship on shore if the *Agamemnon* had come within gun-shot of us, not knowing what she was, as we were close by Cape Finista. The Land was in sight, but we

found out the *Agamemnon* by private signals. She made a private signal to us, and we answered it, she hoisted her number and we showed our number, and she hoisted the signal that she had some news of very great importance to communicate. So you see Ships at sea can talk to one another a great way off. She would have sent us to England had not we sent a store-ship we had with us. We joined Lord Nelson on 13th, and we are now going to Malta with 150 casks of Dollars each containing 5000. That is a good sum for the Soldiers at Malta; another frigate is going with us with as many Dollars on board. It is beautiful to see Lord Nelson's Fleet. I hope I shall be able to give you more account of them when I have been longer with them. How are the rabbits and Ponto and Scug? Give my love to . . . and all my Friends. I am able to stand a Sailor's life, and I hope to conduct myself as an Officer in the British Navy. Do not fret about me, for if you cared no more for the french than I, you would care very little about them. Give my love to my Father Brothers and Sisters. Success to William and his rabbits.

'Dear Mother I remain

'Your ever affectionate Son

'CHARLES.'

Nelson, being now supplied with Frigates, was able to dispose of the money which had been troubling him. When Captain Durham, of the *Defiance*, had inquired what was to be done with the captured dollars which he had on board, the Admiral had replied with Lamb-like humour: 'If the Spaniards come out, fire the dollars at them, and pay them off in their own coin.' He now ordered *L'Aimable* to take the money and go with the *Amphion* to Gibraltar and Malta on convoying duty,' to return and join me immediately,' with the result that both ships missed the battle. 'O that I had been

there!' wrote William Hoste, then Captain of the *Amphion;* and on March 13, 1811, when he commanded the British Squadron in the action off Lissa he did something to appease his lifelong regret by telegraphing to his ships as a last signal, 'Remember Nelson.'

The same day, the 14th, the *Africa* joined from England, and the signal was made by the *Euryalus* 'Enemy at the harbour's mouth.' Nelson now 'placed the *Defence* and *Agamemnon* from seven to ten leagues West of Cadiz, and *Mars* and *Colossus* five leagues East of the Fleet, whose station is from fifteen to twenty West of Cadiz; and by this chain,' he writes, 'I hope to have a constant communication with the Frigates off Cadiz.' On the 16th he notes: 'All the forenoon employed in forming the Fleet into the Order of Sailing. . . . Enemy as before, by signal from *Weasel.*' On the 17th another ship—the *Donegal*—was forced to go into Gibraltar to complete. On the 18th Nelson received letters from the *Cæsar*, and a French officer, prisoner from the *Magnanime*, who said 'they should have taken *Agamemnon* in the night, but they fancied the Lisbon and Oporto Convoy were Ships of War.' And so one more day of waiting wore to an end, and for one more night the unwearied *eyes* of the Fleet kept watch upon the Enemy.

CHAPTER IV

THE EVE OF TRAFALGAR

THE long suspense was over at last. At 7 a.m. on Saturday, 19th of October, the combined fleet began to get under way; within two hours their movement was perceived and reported by the frigates inshore to the Advanced Squadron; at half-past nine Captain Duff, in the *Mars*, signalled to Lord Nelson that 'the enemy are coming out of port.' At this long-hoped-for moment Captain Blackwood, in the *Euryalus*, wrote the following account to his wife:

'What think you, my own dearest love? At this moment the Enemy are coming out, and as if determined to have a fair fight; all night they have been making signals, and the morning showed them to us getting under sail. They have thirty-four sail of the line, and five Frigates. Lord Nelson, I am sorry to say, has but twenty-seven Sail of the line with him; the rest are at Gibraltar, getting water. Not that he has not enough to bring them to close Action; but I want him to have so many as to make the most decisive battle of it that ever was, which will bring us a lasting Peace, I hope, and some prize-money. Within two hours, though our Fleet was at sixteen leagues off, I have let Lord N. know of their coming out, and I have been enabled to send a vessel off to Gibraltar, which will bring Admiral Louis and

the ships in there, out. At this moment we are within four miles of the Enemy, and talking to Lord Nelson by means of Sir H. Popham's signals, though so distant, but repeated along by the rest of the Frigates of this Squadron. You see also, my Harriet, I have time to write to you, and to assure you that to the last moment of my breath, I shall be as much attached to you as man can be, which I am sure you will credit. It is very odd how I have been dreaming all night of my carrying home despatches. God send so much good luck! The day is fine; the sight, of course, beautiful. I expect, before this hour to-morrow, to have carried General Decrès on board the *Victory* in my barge, which I have just been painting. God bless you. No more at present. In my last, which I was hurried to send off, I forgot to enclose you the two letters of Lord N. I shall not make the same mistake now.'

The *Victory*, with the main body of the English fleet, was lying off when this news was received about fifty miles to the W.S.W. in a very light southerly wind. The signal was instantly made for a 'general chase S.E.,' with the object of cutting off the enemy if he should be making for the Mediterranean. At three o'clock the *Colossus* made the signal that 'the enemy's fleet is at sea.' This, however, was only partially true, for, owing to the want of wind, only twelve ships actually left the harbour on that day. These twelve lay becalmed until the early afternoon, when a breeze sprang up from the W.N.W., and they stood on the larboard tack to the northward, followed closely by the *Euryalus* and *Sirius* frigates.

During this interval Nelson wrote two letters, which, though they are far from being the only or the most direct evidence on the point, would almost of themselves

convince an unprejudiced reader that Horatia's relationship to himself and to Lady Hamilton was something more than that of an adopted daughter. Truth sits upon the lips of dying men, and comes not less naturally from those who are upon the point of mortal danger, and know it, as Nelson knew it to the full.

'*Victory*,
'*October* 19, 1805, *Noon*.
'Cadiz, E.S.E. 16 leagues.

'My dearest beloved Emma, the dear Friend of my Bosom,

'The signal has been made that the Enemy's Combined Fleet are coming out of Port. We have very little wind, so that I have no hopes of seeing them before to-morrow. May the God of Battles crown my endeavours with success; at all events, I will take care that my name shall ever be most dear to you and Horatia, both of whom I love as much as my own life. And as my last writing before the Battle will be to you, so I hope in God that I shall live to finish my letter after the Battle. May heaven bless you prays your

'Nelson and Bronte.

'*October 20th*.—In the morning we were close to the Mouth of the Straits, but the wind had not come far enough to the westward to allow the Combined Fleets to weather the Shoals off Trafalgar; but they were counted as far as forty Sail of Ships of War, which I suppose to be thirty-four of the Line, and six Frigates. A group of them was seen off the Lighthouse of Cadiz this morning, but it blows so very fresh and thick weather, that I rather believe they will go into the Harbour before night. May God Almighty give us success over these fellows, and enable us to get a Peace.'

This letter was found open on Lord Nelson's desk, and was brought to Lady Hamilton by Captain Hardy

on his return to England. The second one was addressed to Miss Horatia Nelson Thompson, and runs as follows:

'*Victory*,
'*October* 19, 1805.

'My dearest Angel,

'I was made happy by the pleasure of receiving your letter of September 19, and I rejoice to hear that you are so very good a girl, and love my dear Lady Hamilton, who most dearly loves you. Give her a kiss for me. The Combined Fleets of the enemy are now reported to be coming out of Cadiz, and therefore I answer your letter, my dearest Horatia, to mark to you that you are ever uppermost in my thoughts. I shall be sure of your prayers for my safety, conquest, and speedy return to dear Merton and our dearest good Lady Hamilton. Be a good girl; mind what Miss Connor says to you. Receive, my dearest Horatia, the affectionate parental blessing of your Father,

'Nelson and Bronte.'

The day closes with an entry in the Private Diary:

'In the evening directed the Fleet to observe my motions during the night, and for *Britannia*, *Prince*, and *Dreadnought*, they being heavy sailers, to take their stations as convenient; and for *Mars*, *Orion*, *Belleisle*, *Leviathan*, *Bellerophon*, and *Polyphemus* to go ahead during the night, and to carry a light, standing for the Straits' Mouth.'

After the excitement of Saturday, Sunday, the 20th of October, must have seemed to the English fleet the longest day in the year. Daylight found them close to the Straits of Gibraltar, but showed them no sign of the enemy. The object of their southerly move being

therefore accomplished, they wore and made sail to the N.W. with a fresh breeze. At 7 a.m. the frigate *Phœbe* signalled that the enemy bore north. By noon the whole fleet was back within eight or nine leagues of Cadiz, which lay to the N.E. of them, while they were standing to the W.N.W. on the larboard tack. The enemy's ships in harbour in the meantime, having weighed at daylight, put to sea with a light breeze, and endeavoured to join their twelve companions which had cleared the day before. For some time they were baffled by wind and thick weather, but between 2 and 3 p.m. the horizon cleared, and the whole of the combined fleet was able to unite. 'Whereupon,' says James, 'Vice-Admiral Villeneuve ordered his fleet to form in five columns, agreeably to a plan which he had previously communicated to his flag officers and captains. The fleet accordingly divided itself into two parts. The first part, consisting of twenty-one sail of the line and denominated the line of battle, then sub-divided itself into three squadrons of seven ships each, of which the centre was commanded by M. Villeneuve himself, the van by Vice-Admiral Alava, and the rear by Rear-Admiral Dumanoir. The second part, or *corps de réserve*, divided itself into two squadrons of six ships each. The first was under the orders of Admiral Gravina and the second of Rear-Admiral Magon.'

The English fleet, steering W.N.W., was taken aback by the change of wind, which assisted the enemy in completing his formation. The squall from the W.S.W. which had struck them about noon was followed by another from the W.N.W., in which at

least one ship had her maintopmast carried away. By four, however, this trouble was over, the fleet set courses and topgallant-sails, wore, and again came to on the larboard tack, steering north. The *Euryalus*, which had during the squall made the signal 'The enemy appears determined to push to the westward,' now received (at 5.40) a telegraphic message from the *Victory*: 'I rely on your keeping sight of the enemy,' to which the narratives of James and Beatty both add the words 'during the night.'

The day was practically over, and there seems to have been some apprehension on board the *Victory* lest the enemy might think it prudent to return to harbour. The reports, however, from the look-out ships continued to be reassuring, and gave Lord Nelson the opportunity of cheering on his midshipmen. Seeing a group of them gathered together, he said with a smile: 'This day, or to-morrow, will be a fortunate one for you, young men.' In the sense in which he no doubt used the word 'fortunate' the saying was abundantly fulfilled, for within twenty-four hours they had all known what it was to be with Nelson 'in the full tide of happiness'; and the names of those who fought at Trafalgar will never lack honour from their remotest posterity. But, even as worthy Dr. Beatty understood the prophecy, it was justified by the event. In his view, 'his Lordship' was 'alluding to their being promoted in the event of a victory.' The loss by death among the junior naval officers on board the ship included only two midshipmen, and promotion came to no less than four of the survivors.

At six o'clock the wind fell to a light breeze, the weather became hazy, and darkness soon fell. Nelson's orders for the night are contained in the memorandum following:

'*Victory*, off Cadiz,
'20*th October*, 1805.

'Captain Blackwood to keep with two Frigates in sight of the Enemy in the night. Two other Frigates to be placed between him and the *Defence*, Captain Hope. *Colossus* will take her station between *Defence* and *Mars*. *Mars* to communicate with the *Victory*.

'Signals by Night.

'If the enemy are standing to the southward or towards the Straits, burn two blue lights together, every hour, in order to make the greater blaze. If the enemy are standing to the westward, three guns, quick, every hour.

'Nelson and Bronte.'

The original of this memorandum was thus endorsed by Captain Hope of the *Defence*:

'This was signed by Lord Nelson the day before he fell, the last time I saw him.—George Hope.'

We know from Beatty's narrative that 'at eight o'clock in the morning of the 20th the *Victory* hove to, and Admiral Collingwood, with the captains of the *Mars*, *Colossus*, and *Defence*, came on board to receive instructions from his Lordship. At eleven minutes past nine they returned to their respective ships.' We have seen also in the Private Diary how the order was given on the evening of the 19th 'for *Mars*, *Orion*, *Belleisle*, *Leviathan*, *Bellerophon*, and *Polyphemus* to go ahead

during the night.' We have now, therefore, the names of eight ships, evidently the fastest sailers among the ships of the line, employed in the same manner—*i.e.*, to go ahead of the fleet during the night, and when nearing the enemy to keep up the chain of communication between the frigates and the *Victory;* in short, to form an Advanced Squadron. Mr. Julian Corbett has pointed out to me that the inference from these facts is plain and irresistible. We have here the carrying out of the intention expressed in the Secret Memorandum of October the 9th already printed: 'I have therefore (*i.e.*, to save loss of time in bringing the enemy to battle decisively) made up my mind to keep the Fleet in that position of sailing (with the exception of the First and Second in command) that the Order of Sailing is to be the Order of Battle, placing the Fleet in two lines of sixteen Ships each, with an Advanced Squadron of eight of the fastest sailing Two-decked Ships.'

This is confirmed by a communication made to Sir Harris Nicolas by Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, G.C.B., captain of the *Orion* at Trafalgar, which will be found printed in full on a later page, and in which the Advanced Squadron is referred to, and the *Orion* mentioned as being 'one of the eight ships named.' It is also to be noted that the eight ships now sent ahead of the fleet were all 'two-decked ships,' such as the Secret Memorandum intended should compose the Advanced Squadron, for the *Belleisle*, *Mars*, *Defence*, *Colossus*, *Leviathan*, *Orion*, and *Bellerophon* were all 74-gun ships, and the *Polyphemus* a 64. These eight ships, then, were the Advanced Squadron of the Secret

Memorandum; and when we come to the moment of the attack it will be interesting to see how they were used, for their movements form part of the evidence in the inevitable inquiry how far the tactics actually followed in the Battle of Trafalgar differed from those prescribed in the Secret Memorandum, why they so differed, and whether the difference is to be considered as enhancing or detracting from the value of the action as an example of Nelson's methods.

The day closes with an entry in the Private Diary, which concludes as follows:

'In the afternoon Captain Blackwood telegraphed that the Enemy seemed determined to go to the westward, and that they shall *not* do if in the power of Nelson and Bronte to prevent them. At 5 telegraphed Captain B. that I relied upon his keeping sight of the Enemy. At six o'clock *Naiad* made the signal for thirty-one Sail of the Enemy, N.N.E. The Frigates and look-out Ships kept sight of the Enemy most admirably all night, and told me by signals which tack they were upon. At 8 we wore, and stood to the S.W., and at 4 a.m. wore, stood to the N.E.'

At six o'clock on the morning of Monday, the 21st of October, the enemy were seen from the *Victory* bearing east by south at a distance of ten or twelve miles, with Cape Trafalgar in a direct line behind them some twenty-one miles away. They were formed in a close line of battle on the starboard tack, standing to the southward. At seven (by her log) the *Victory* made the general signal to 'Prepare for battle,' and followed this shortly afterwards with the signal to 'Bear up and

steer east.' She then bore up to the eastward herself, shook out all reefs of her topsails, set her steering sails and royals, and cleared for quarters. As to the Commander-in-Chief himself, we have ample evidence of the manner in which he spent the remaining hours before the actual moment of attack. 'Soon after daylight,' says Dr. Beatty, 'Lord Nelson came upon deck. He was dressed as usual in his Admiral's frock-coat, bearing on the left breast four stars of different Orders, which he always wore with his common apparel. He did not wear his sword in the Battle of Trafalgar. It had been taken from the place where it hung up in his cabin, and was laid ready on his table; but it is supposed he forgot to call for it. This was the only action in which he ever appeared without a sword. He displayed excellent spirits, and expressed his pleasure at the prospect of giving a fatal blow to the naval power of France and Spain; and spoke with confidence of obtaining a signal victory notwithstanding the inferiority of the British fleet, declaring to Captain Hardy that "he would not be contented with capturing less than twenty sail of the line." He afterwards pleasantly observed that "the 21st of October was the happiest day in the year among his family," but did not assign the reason of this. His lordship had previously entertained a strong presentiment that this would prove the auspicious day, and had several times said to Captain Hardy and Dr. Scott (chaplain of the Ship and Foreign Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, whose intimate friendship he enjoyed), "the 21st of October will be our day."' Sir Harris Nicolas sug-

gests that Nelson in these remarks was alluding to the fact that on the 21st of October, 1757, his maternal uncle, Captain Suckling, in the *Dreadnought*, in company with two other line-of-battle ships, attacked and beat off a French squadron of four sail of the line and three frigates off Cape François.

At eight o'clock (Captain Blackwood says six, but all the logs are against him) the *Victory* made the signal for the captains of the *Euryalus* and other frigates, and they came on board accordingly. 'In a few minutes,' says Blackwood, 'I went on board, and had the satisfaction to find the Admiral in good but very calm spirits. After receiving my congratulations at the approach of the moment he so often and so long had wished for, he replied: 'I mean to-day to bleed the captains of the Frigates, as I shall keep you on board until the very last minute.' His mind seemed entirely directed to the strength and formation of the Enemy's line, as well as to the effects which his novel mode of attack was likely to produce. He seemed very much to regret, and with reason, that the Enemy tacked to the northward (their manœuvring took apparently from seven to ten o'clock), and formed their line on the larboard instead of the starboard tack, which latter line of bearing would have kept the Straits' Mouth open; instead of which, by forming to the northward, they brought the shoals of Trafalgar and St. Pedro under our lee, and also, with the existing wind, kept open the Port of Cadiz, which was of infinite consequence to them. This movement was in a great degree the cause of Lord Nelson's making

the signal, 'Prepare to anchor,' the necessity of which was impressed on his mind to the last moment of his life; and so much did he think of the possibility of the Enemy's escape into Cadiz, that he desired me to employ the Frigates as much as I could to complete the destruction of the Enemy, whether at anchor or not, and not to think of saving ships or men, for annihilation to both was his first object, and capture but a secondary one.'

Collingwood's journal tells us that at ten o'clock the enemy's fleet 'wore, formed their line, and laid their heads to the northward; the British fleet in two columns bearing down on them, the weather division led by the *Victory*, the lee by the *Royal Sovereign*.' Dr. Beatty adds that Lord Nelson about this time 'had ascended the poop to have a better view of both lines of the British fleet, and while there gave particular directions for taking down from his cabin the different fixtures, and for being very careful in removing the portrait of Lady Hamilton. 'Take care of my guardian angel,' said he, addressing himself to the persons to be employed in this business. Immediately after this he quitted the poop and retired to his cabin for a few minutes, where he wrote the following prayer and codicil to his will:

'PRIVATE DIARY.

'*Monday, October* 21, 1805.

'At daylight saw the Enemy's Combined Fleet from east to E.S.E.; bore away; made the signal for Order of Sailing and to Prepare for Battle. The Enemy with their heads to the southward. At seven the

Enemy wearing in succession. May the Great God, whom I worship, grant to my Country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious Victory; and may no misconduct in anyone tarnish it; and may humanity after Victory be the predominant feature in the British Fleet. For myself individually, I commit my life to Him who made me, and may His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my Country faithfully. To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen. Amen. Amen.'

'CODICIL TO LORD NELSON'S WILL.

'October the twenty-first, one thousand eight hundred and five, then in sight of the Combined Fleets of France and Spain, distant about ten miles. Whereas the eminent services of Emma Hamilton, widow of the Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton, have been of the very greatest service to our King and Country, to my knowledge, without her receiving any reward from either our King or Country;—first, that she obtained the King of Spain's letter, in 1796, to his brother, the King of Naples, acquainting him of his intention to declare War against England; from which letter the Ministry sent out orders to then Sir John Jervis, to strike a stroke, if opportunity offered, against either the Arsenals of Spain, or her Fleets. That neither of these was done is not the fault of Lady Hamilton. The opportunity might have offered. Secondly, the British Fleet under my command, could never have returned the second time to Egypt, had not Lady Hamilton's influence with the Queen of Naples caused letters to be wrote to the Governor of Syracuse, that he was to encourage the Fleet being supplied with everything, should they put into any Port in Sicily. We put into Syracuse, and received every supply, went to Egypt, and destroyed the French Fleet. Could I have rewarded these services I would not now call upon my Country; but as that has not been in my power, I

leave Emma Lady Hamilton, therefore, a Legacy to my King and Country, that they will give her an ample provision to maintain her rank in life. I also leave to the beneficence of my Country my adopted daughter, Horatia Nelson Thompson; and I desire she will use in future the name of Nelson only. These are the only favours I ask of my King and Country at this moment when I am going to fight their Battle. May God bless my King and Country, and all those who I hold dear. My relations it is needless to mention: they will of course be amply provided for.

'NELSON AND BRONTE.

'*Witness:* HENRY BLACKWOOD,
'T. M. HARDY.'

It is hardly too much to say that this document has never quite ceased to trouble the conscience of Englishmen: for a hundred years common-sense and justice have struggled inconclusively with vaguer but not less irresistible feelings of loyalty and remorse. Professor Laughton in his 'Nelson Memorial' has admirably summed up the arguments against public action. 'It was noticed at the time,' he says—'it has often been commented on since—that no attention was paid by the Government to the so-called codicil to Nelson's will, written and witnessed little more than two hours before his death. For this neglect Nelson's brother, the first Earl, has been most unjustly blamed. It has been said that Hardy gave the paper to him as the executor; that he detained it till the Parliamentary grant to himself and his sisters had been secured, and then, with an insulting sneer, tossed it to Lady Hamilton, telling her to get what she could out of it. This is

positively untrue, except in the paper having been given to him. For the rest, it was duly laid before the First Lord of the Treasury and the law officers of the Crown. The reference in it to the Queen of Naples rendered it unadvisable to make it public; in law, of course, it was valueless; and when considered by the First Lord of the Treasury, it made no appeal for Lady Hamilton on sentimental grounds, but solely as one who had rendered important services to the State. Unluckily for her, the First Lord of the Treasury happened to be Lord Grenville, who, as Foreign Secretary from 1794 to 1800, was the one man in England who could best appreciate her services; who knew that her claims—the claims stated in the codicil—were fictitious; that the statement about the King of Spain's letter was as entirely false as that relating to the Queen's letters to the Governor of Syracuse. All the correspondence of the time had passed through Grenville's hands; he knew exactly what had taken place, and that Lady Hamilton's part in it was infinitesimal. On public grounds she had absolutely no claim on the Government, and Grenville could do nothing but refuse any assistance. It may, of course, be said, and has been said, that when Nelson's relations were being so liberally provided for, something should have been done for the woman whom Nelson loved, whom he believed to be the mother of his child, whom he addressed as his "own dear wife in the face of Heaven," whose name he had invoked with his latest breath. Sentiment supports such a view, and public opinion at the time would scarcely have been scan-

dalized. Still, there is much to be said for the action of the Government. A grant to Earl Nelson was a necessary accompaniment of the title; the Viscountess, though living apart from her husband, could not be ignored—she was legally entitled to recognition; and Mrs. Bolton and Mrs. Matcham were known to be in comparatively narrow circumstances. On the other hand, Lady Hamilton had absolutely no legal claim, and as to sentimental grounds, her connection with Nelson had always been denied—Horatia's parentage had never been acknowledged. It has been shown that to the last Nelson's most intimate friends believed the relations between him and Lady Hamilton to be purely platonic. It was, too, well known that she was already amply provided for. By her husband's will she had an annuity of £800, a capital sum of £800, and plate, pictures, furniture, etc., to the estimated value of £5,000. Nelson had allowed her £1,200 a year whilst he lived, and she now inherited, under his will, an annuity of £500, a capital sum of £2,000, and the Merton estate, with the house and furniture, valued at from £12,000 to £14,000. All this represents an income of about £2,500 a year, which the Government, when considering her memorials—if, indeed, they were not dismissed with contempt as impudent falsehoods—may have reasonably thought sufficient for a woman of her antecedents. Nor, indeed, was her conduct at this time calculated to inspire much sympathy.'

The Government's case has never been better put, but, as may happen with Governments and their cases, it has failed to convince even those who put it.

The questions considered by the law officers of the Crown were indeed easily answered: 'What legal claim has this woman? What evidence of public services? What is the reply to her sentimental appeal? What income is sufficient for such a person?' But the questions which the nation had in mind were not these: they were, rather, 'How can we refuse the last request of this man? How can we forget that of these two names which he bequeathed to us one is that which meant to him all that a woman could be in his life, and one is that of the daughter by whom alone the inheritance of his blood will descend to posterity? What is it to us if our money be idly spent? We offer it to no one living, but to the memory of Nelson, alone in the cabin of the *Victory*, drifting to the last of all his battles.'

CHAPTER V

THE SHIPS AND SIGNALS

THE Combined Fleet which lay before Nelson at this moment was composed as follows:

FRENCH: 18 of the Line, 5 Frigates, 2 Brigs.

Gun-ship.		
80	*Bucentaure*	Vice-Admiral P. Ch. J. B. S. Villeneuve. Captain Jean Jacques Magendie.
80	*Formidable*	Rear-Admiral P. R. M. E. Dumanoir le Pelley. Captain Jean Marie Letellier.
80	*Neptune*	Commodore Esprit Tranquille Maistral.
80	*Indomptable*	Commodore Jean Joseph Hubert.
74	*Algésiras*	Rear-Admiral Charles Magon. Captain Gabriel Auguste Brouard.
74	*Pluton*	Commodore Julien M. Cosmao Kerjulien.
74	*Mont-Blanc*	Commodore G. J. Noel La Villegris.
74	*Intrépide*	Commodore Louis Antoine Cyprian Infernet.
74	*Swiftsure*	Captain C. E. L'Hospitalier Villemadrin.
74	*Aigle*	Captain Pierre Paul Gourrège.
74	*Scipion*	Captain Charles Berenger.

Gun-ship.

74	*Dugnay-Trouin* -	Captain Claude Touffet.
74	*Berwick* - -	Captain Jean Gilles Filhol Camas.
74	*Argonaute* - -	Captain Jacques Epron.
74	*Achille* - -	Captain Gabriel de Nieport.
74	*Redoutable* - -	Captain Jean Jacques Étienne Lucas.
74	*Fougueux* - -	Captain Louis Alexis Beaudouin.
74	*Héros* - -	Captain Jean B. J. Remi Poulain.

Frigates: *Cornélie*, *Hermione*, *Hortense*, *Rhin*, *Thémis*.
Brigs: *Argus*, *Furet*.

SPANISH: 15 of the Line.

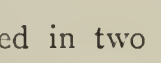
Gun-ship.		
130	*Santísima Trinidad*	Rear-Admiral don B. Hidalgo Cisneros. Commodore don Francisco de Uriarte.
112	*Principe de Asturias*	Admiral don Frederico Gravina. Rear - Admiral don Antonio Escano.
112	*Santa Ana* -	Vice-Admiral don Ign. Maria de Alava. Captain don Josef Guardoqui.
100	*Rayo* - - -	Commodore don Enrique Macdonel.
80	*Neptuno* - -	Commodore don Cayetano Valdès.
80	*Argonauta* - -	Commodore don Antonio Parejas.
74	*Bahama* - -	Captain don Dionisio Galiano.
74	*Montanes* - -	Captain don Josef Salcedo.
74	*San Agustin* -	Captain don Felipe Xado Cagigal.
74	*San Ildefonso* -	Captain don Josef Bargas.
74	*San Juan Nepomuceno*	Captain don Cosme Churruca.
74	*Monarca* - -	Captain don Teodoro Argumosa.
74	*San Francisco de Asis*	Captain don Luis de Flores.
74	*San Justo* - -	Captain don Miguel Gaston.
64	*San Leandro* -	Captain don Josef Quevedo.

It will be observed that the Spanish Fleet contained three first-rates, out of only five present in the action; of these, the huge *Santísima Trinidad* was the largest and most heavily armed ship then afloat. It may also be useful to point out, for the avoiding of confusion in what follows, that there were present a French *Argonaute* and a Spanish *Argonauta;* a French *Swiftsure* and *Achille* and an English *Swiftsure* and *Achille;* a French *Neptune*, a Spanish *Neptuno*, and an English *Neptune;* and that, while the *Berwick* was a French ship, the *Tonnant*, *Téméraire*, and *Spartiate* were English, in spite of their names. As for the Admirals and Captains, their names, too, are here given in full, because they are seldom or never mentioned in English accounts of the action, though they deserve to be had in everlasting remembrance by us, as well as by their own countrymen. For Trafalgar was no hollow victory, no massacre of poltroons, but a death grapple between two resolute and heroic companies. The seamanship, the gunnery, the genius, were ours; the courage and unflinching sacrifice were perhaps equally divided. 'The Enemy's ships,' said Collingwood, 'were fought with a gallantry highly honourable to their officers, but the attack on them was irresistible'; and Blackwood, whose position enabled him to judge still better, is equally emphatic: 'Almost all seemed as if inspired by the one common sentiment of conquer or die. The Enemy, to do them justice, were not less so. They waited the attack of the British with a coolness I was sorry to witness, and they fought in a way that must do them honour. As a spectator, who saw the faults, or rather

the mistakes, of both sides, I shall ever do them the justice to say so.' The losses of the *Bucentaure*, the *Santa Ana*, and one or two others in the Combined Fleet, were probably the most severe ever suffered in naval warfare, and the conduct of the *Intrépide*, the *Achille*, the *Redoutable*, or the *Aigle*, will bear comparison with that of any ship in any action ever fought.

The handling of the Combined Fleet as a whole, too, was by no means such as to make Nelson's task an easier one. The best account of it is that given to Admiral Ekins, the author of 'Naval Battles,' by an officer (of the *Conqueror*, it would appear) who was present in the action:

'The Combined Fleet, after veering from the starboard to the larboard tack, gradually fell into the form of an irregular crescent, in which they remained to the moment of attack. Many have considered that the French Admiral intended this formation of the line of battle; but from the information I obtained after the action, connected with some documents found on board the *Bucentaure*, I believe it was the intention to have formed a line ahead, consisting of twenty-one sail, the supposed force of the British Fleet; and a squadron of observation, composed of twelve sail of the line, under Admiral Gravina, intended to act according to circumstances after the British fleet were engaged. By waring together, the enemy's line became inverted, and the light squadron, which had been advanced in the van on the starboard tack, was left in the rear after waring, and the ships were subsequently mingled with the rear of the main body. The wind being light, with a heavy

swell, and the fleet lying with their maintopsails to the mast, it was impossible for the ships to preserve their exact stations in the line, consequently scarce any ship was immediately ahead or astern of her second. The fleet had then the appearance, generally, of having formed in two lines, thus  , so that the ships to leeward seemed to be opposite the space left between two in the weather-line. In the rear the line was in some places trebled. . . . All these positions I believe to have been merely accidental, and to accident alone I attribute the concave circle of the fleet, or crescent line of battle. The wind shifted to the westward as the morning advanced; and, of course, the enemy's ships came up with the wind, forming a bow-and-quarter line. The ships were therefore obliged to edge away to keep in the wake of their leaders, and this manœuvre, from the lightness of the wind, the unmanageable state of the ships in a heavy swell, and, we may add, the inexperience of the enemy, not being performed with facility and dexterity, undesignedly threw the combined fleets into a position perhaps the best that could have been planned, had it been supported by the skilful manœuvring of individual ships and with efficient practice in gunnery.'

This account tallies with that given by Admiral Collingwood in a letter to Sir Thomas Pasley, which will be found in Nicolas. Collingwood, however, considers the formation intentional: 'They formed their line with nicety, and waited our attack with great composure.' Nor did Nelson himself perceive any signs of confusion or inefficiency; as he approached

their line 'he frequently remarked that they put a good face upon it.' The action was eventually a very tangled affair, and we cannot follow the manœuvring of the Enemy's ships; but it is worth mentioning that the claim made by the Spaniards to have three times repulsed the British attempt to break the line is not so entirely without the support of evidence as has been commonly thought. No English ship was ever allowed by the *Principe de Asturias* to pass to leeward of her; and several, including the *Victory* herself, after passing one opponent, found themselves jammed or blocked by others of the enemy. Captain Moorsom, of the *Revenge*, gives them due credit for these tactics: '*Revenge* got through between the fifth and sixth ships from their rear. They closed so well together that a Frenchman's jib-boom took my mizen-topsail as I passed, and he was near jamming me between himself and his second ahead.' And we shall see presently, in the account of the separate ship's actions, that the British Fleet, whose deliberate plan was to double on parts of the enemy's line, again and again found that, for a time at any rate, the enemy had succeeded in doubling and trebling on them. On the whole, it is clear that, with so much courage and readiness to seize a possible advantage, and with superior numbers, the Combined Fleet was no contemptible opponent for twenty-seven English sail of the line. In a regular action of the orthodox type they would have been still more formidable; but a battle of the orthodox type was precisely what Nelson did not offer them.

The British Fleet approached the enemy in two columns; their composition and force was as follows,

the order being that given by Collingwood's list but not in fact the order of sailing:

VAN OR WEATHER COLUMN—VICE-ADMIRAL NELSON: 12 of the Line.

Gun-ship.		
100	*Victory* - -	Vice-Admiral Viscount Nelson, K.B. Captain Thomas Masterman Hardy.
98	*Téméraire* - -	Captain Eliab Harvey.
98	*Neptune* - -	Captain Thomas Francis Fremantle.
74	*Conqueror* - -	Captain Israel Pellew.
74	*Leviathan* - -	Captain Henry William Bayntun.
74	*Ajax* - - -	Lieutenant John Pilfold (acting).
74	*Orion* - -	Captain Edward Codrington.
64	*Agamemnon* -	Captain Sir Edward Berry.
74	*Minotaur* - -	Captain Charles John Moore Mansfield.
74	*Spartiate* - -	Captain Sir Charles Laforey, Bart.
100	*Britannia* - -	Rear-Admiral the Earl of Northesk. Captain Charles Bullen.
64	*Africa* -	Captain Henry Digby.

REAR OR LEE COLUMN—VICE-ADMIRAL COLLINGWOOD: 15 of the Line.

Gun-ship.		
100	*Royal Sovereign* -	Vice-Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood. Captain Edward Rotheram.
74	*Mars* - - -	Captain George Duff.
74	*Belleisle* - -	Captain William Hargood.
80	*Tonnant* - -	Captain Charles Tyler.
74	*Bellerophon* -	Captain John Cooke.
74	*Colossus* - -	Captain James Nicoll Morris.
74	*Achille* - -	Captain Richard King.
64	*Polyphemus* -	Captain Richard Redmill.
74	*Revenge* - -	Captain Robert Moorsom.

Gun-ship.

74	*Swiftsure*	- -	Captain William George Rutherford.
74	*Defence*	- -	Captain George Hope.
74	*Thunderer*	- -	Lieutenant John Stockham (acting).
74	*Defiance*	- -	Captain Philip Charles Durham.
98	*Prince*	- -	Captain Richard Grindall.
98	*Dreadnought*	-	Captain John Conn.

Besides the above twenty-seven ships of the line, there were also present :

Frigate :	*Euryalus* -	Captain the Hon. Henry Blackwood.
,,	*Naiad* - -	Captain Thomas Dundas.
,,	*Phœbe* - -	Captain the Hon. Thomas Bladen Capel.
,,	*Sirius* - -	Captain William Prowse.
Schooner :	*Pickle* - -	Lieutenant John Richard Lapenotière.
Cutter :	*Entreprenante*	Lieutenant John Power.

It will be seen at once from the above lists that the Advanced Squadron of eight fast ships, intended to form the *corps de réserve* or third line shown in the Secret Memorandum, had now ceased to exist. With a fleet of forty of the line against forty-six, it had seemed a useful provision ; but no doubt, with a total of only twenty-seven available, Nelson did not feel himself strong enough to make a third line. He therefore placed two of the eight ships—the *Leviathan* and *Orion* —in his own column, and the other six—the *Belleisle*, *Mars*, *Bellerophon*, *Colossus*, *Polyphemus*, and *Defence*—he gave to Collingwood, probably because it was important for the lee division to come to action as speedily as possible, his own business and that of the weather

column being, as shown in the Secret Memorandum, 'to take care that the movements of the Second in Command are as little interrupted as is possible.'

The wind was now very light from the N.W., with a heavy ground-swell from the Westward. The British Fleet, with all sail set, advanced at a rate which is estimated to have been at first three knots, but afterwards to have fallen to a mile and a half an hour. Many details have been given by different authorities of the sayings and doings of Nelson during these last moments of expectation. 'As the *Victory* drew near to the enemy,' says Dr. Beatty, 'his Lordship, accompanied by Captain Hardy and the Captains of the four Frigates, who had been called on board by signal to receive instructions, visited the different decks of the Ship. He addressed the crew at their several quarters, admonished them against firing a single shot without being sure of their object, and expressed himself to the Officers highly satisfied with the arrangements made at their respective stations. . . . Several Officers of the Ship now communicated to each other their sentiments of anxiety for his Lordship's personal safety, to which every other consideration seemed to give way. Indeed, all were confident of gaining a glorious victory, but the apprehensions for his Lordship were great and general, and the Surgeon made known to Dr. Scott his fears that his Lordship would be made the object of the Enemy's marksmen, and his desire that he might be entreated by somebody to cover the stars on his coat with a handkerchief. Dr. Scott and Mr. Scott (Public Secretary) both observed, however, that such request

would have no effect, as they knew his Lordship's sentiments on the subject so well that they were sure he would be highly displeased with whoever should take the liberty of recommending any change in his dress on this account; and when the Surgeon declared to Mr. Scott that he would avail himself of the opportunity of making his sick-report for the day to submit his sentiments to the Admiral, Mr. Scott replied: "Take care, Doctor, what you are about. I would not be the man to mention such a matter to him." The Surgeon, notwithstanding, persisted in his design, and remained on deck to find a proper opportunity of addressing his Lordship; but this never occurred, as his Lordship continued occupied with the Captains of the Frigates (to whom he was explaining his intentions respecting the services they were to perform during the Battle) till a short time before the Enemy opened their fire on the *Royal Sovereign*, when Lord Nelson ordered all persons not stationed on the quarterdeck or poop to repair to their proper quarters; and the Surgeon, much concerned at this disappointment, retired from the deck with several other Officers.' There is a tragic note in these long decorous sentences, for the writer of them was himself 'the Surgeon' of whom he speaks, and whose 'disappointment' was in an hour's time to be turned into a lifelong regret. Apprehensions of the same kind weighed upon Captain Blackwood, too, and suggested to him a different and more feasible expedient for lessening the danger to the Commander-in-Chief. 'At that critical moment,' he says, 'I ventured to represent to his Lordship the value

of such a life as his, and particularly in the present battle; and I proposed hoisting his Flag in the *Euryalus*, whence he could better see what was going on, as well as what to order in case of necessity. But he would not hear of it, and gave as his reason the force of example; and probably he was right. My next object, therefore, was to endeavour to induce his Lordship to allow the *Téméraire*, *Neptune*, and *Leviathan* to lead into action before the *Victory*, which was then the headmost. After much conversation, in which I ventured to give it as the joint opinion of Captain Hardy and myself how advantageous it would be for the Fleet for his Lordship to keep as long as possible out of the Battle, he at length consented to allow the *Téméraire*, which was then sailing abreast of the *Victory*, to go ahead, and hailed Captain Harvey to say such were his intentions, if the *Téméraire* could pass the *Victory*. Captain Harvey being rather out of hail, his Lordship sent me to communicate his wishes, which I did; when, on returning to the *Victory*, I found him doing all he could to increase rather than diminish sail, so that the *Téméraire* could not pass the *Victory;* consequently, when they came within gunshot of the enemy, Captain Harvey, finding his efforts ineffectual, was obliged to take his station astern of the Admiral.'

To this we may add the statement of Captain Chamier, the Editor of 'James's Naval History,' to the effect that 'when the *Téméraire* ranged up on the *Victory*'s quarter, in order to pass her and lead, Lord Nelson hailed her; and speaking, as he always did, with a slight nasal intonation, said: "I'll thank you,

Captain Harvey, to keep in your proper station, which is *astern* of the *Victory*." ' This seems at first sight somewhat inconsistent on Nelson's part, but the incident probably took place after the *Téméraire* had been definitely ordered to take her place astern of the *Victory* by a signal made, as the *Conqueror's* log notes, half an hour before the *Victory* opened fire.

Captain Blackwood continues, in a passage which shows how Nelson, who foresaw his own death and the whole course of the action, foresaw also the exact extent of his coming victory and the dangers which would follow it: 'During the five hours and a half that I remained on board the *Victory*, in which I was not ten times from his side, he frequently asked me what I should consider as a Victory, the certainty of which he never for an instant seemed to doubt, although, from the situation of the land, he questioned the possibility of the subsequent preservation of the Prizes. My answer was: "That, considering the handsome way in which the Battle was offered by the Enemy, their apparent determination for a fair trial of strength, and the proximity of the land, I thought if fourteen Ships were captured it would be a glorious result." To which he always replied: "I shall not, Blackwood, be satisfied with anything short of twenty." '

We have now to record the more famous and important signals made by the Commander-in-Chief immediately before the beginning of the action. Of these many incorrect accounts have been given, and the true order has, perhaps, never been observed; but there is little real difficulty in selecting the most trust-

worthy evidence on the subject. The log and signal-book of the *Euryalus*, which were the best kept in the Fleet, are clear as to four out of the five, and the fifth is supplied, as we have seen, by the *Conqueror*. It appears, then, that they were made as follows: First, Lord Nelson, seeing 'the direction in which the Combined Fleet now lay, with a home port scarcely seven leagues off on the lee-bow, and the evident forging ahead of the Ships, whereby that distance was every minute diminishing,' telegraphed to Collingwood: 'I intend to push or go through the end of the Enemy's line to prevent them from getting into Cadiz,' and altered the course of the *Victory* accordingly more to the Northward, or larboard side. This signal is given by the log of the *Euryalus* as having been repeated by her forty-three minutes before the *Victory* first opened fire. The manœuvre is not noticed by the log of the *Victory* or of any other ships, except perhaps the *Thunderer*, which notes: 'Observed the *Victory* alter her course, and lead the starboard division towards the Enemy's centre.' But the *Orion's* Journal relates that 'the *Victory*, after making a feint of attacking their van, hauled to starboard, so as to reach their centre'; and Sir Edward Codrington, the *Orion's* Captain, afterwards made to Sir Harris Nicolas the following communication, to which we have already referred (p. 50).

'In Lord Nelson's Memorandum of the 9th of October he refers to "an Advanced Squadron of eight of the fastest sailing two-decked ships" to be added to either of the two lines of the Order of Sailing, as may be

required; and says that this Advanced Squadron would probably have to cut through "two, three, or four ships of the Enemy's centre, so as to ensure getting at their Commander-in-Chief, on whom every effort must be made to capture"; and he afterwards twice speaks of the Enemy's van coming to succour their rear. Now, I am under the impression that I was expressly instructed by Lord Nelson (referring to the probability of the Enemy's van coming down upon us), being in the *Orion*, one of the eight Ships named, that he himself would probably make a feint of attacking their van in order to prevent or retard it. I have no doubt of the *Victory* having hauled out to port for a short space, and of my calling the attention of my First Lieutenant Croft to the circumstance of her having taken her larboard and weather studding sails in, whilst she kept her starboard and her studding sails set and shaking in order to make it clear to the Fleet that his movement was merely a feint, and that the *Victory* would speedily resume her course, and fulfil her intention of cutting through at the centre. In admiration of this movement, I observed to Lieutenant Croft: "How beautifully the Admiral is carrying into effect his intentions!" and it was this exposure to the raking fire of several of the Ships ahead of the French centre that occasioned the *Victory* being so much cut up before she reached her proposed position.'

The next signal was probably that already mentioned, ordering the *Témeraire* to keep astern of the *Victory*. This was made, according to the *Conqueror's* log, thirty minutes before the *Victory* opened fire. Immediately

before giving the order for this, Lord Nelson had conceived the idea of a general signal to encourage the fleet. 'I was walking with him on the poop,' says Captain Blackwood, 'when he said: "I'll now amuse the Fleet with a signal," and he asked me "if I did not think there was one yet wanting." I answered that I thought the whole of the Fleet seemed very clearly to understand what they were about, and to vie with each other who should first get nearest to the *Victory* or *Royal Sovereign*.' Nelson, however, kept his opinion and acted upon it. Captain John Pasco, who acted as Flag Lieutenant of the *Victory*, relates what followed: 'His Lordship came to me on the poop, and after ordering certain signals to be made . . . he said: "Mr. Pasco, I wish to say to the Fleet, 'ENGLAND CONFIDES THAT EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY;'" and he added: "You must be quick, for I have one more to make, which is for Close Action." I replied: "If your Lordship will permit me to substitute the *expects* for *confides* the signal will soon be completed, because the word *expects* is in the vocabulary, and *confides* must be spelt." His Lordship replied, in haste and with seeming satisfaction: "That will do, Pasco; make it directly." When it had been answered by a few Ships in the Van, he ordered me to make the signal for Close Action, and to *keep it up*. Accordingly, I hoisted No. 16 at the top-gallant masthead, and there it remained until shot away.' This is borne out by the log of the *Euryalus*, which, however, enters an additional signal as having been made between 'England expects' and 'Close action'—namely, the order 'Prepare to anchor,'

with the pendant added which signified, 'This order to take effect after the close of the day.' According to the log of the *Euryalus*, these three last signals were made twenty-seven, twenty-three, and three minutes respectively before the *Victory* opened fire.

The Commander-in-Chief and the Second in Command at the head of their columns were, in fact, by this time both entering the fire zone; the time for consultation and for signalling was over. Captain Blackwood in memorable and significant words relates his parting from his chief: 'When Lord Nelson found the shot pass over the *Victory*, he desired Captain Prowse of the *Sirius* and myself to go on board our Ships, and in our way to tell all the Captains of Line-of-Battle Ships that he depended on their exertions; and that if by the mode of attack prescribed they found it impracticable to get into action immediately, they might adopt whatever they thought best, provided it led them quickly and closely alongside an enemy. He then again desired me to go away; and as we were standing on the front of the poop, I took his hand and said, "I trust, my Lord, that on my return to the *Victory*, which will be as soon as possible, I shall find your Lordship well and in possession of twenty Prizes." On which he made this reply: "God bless you, Blackwood, I shall never speak to you again."'

CHAPTER VI

THE TACTICS OF TRAFALGAR

We have now to consider the tactics of the Battle. They have been often discussed, but never hitherto with any satisfactory result. This is due to several obvious causes. During the years immediately following Nelson's death, when authentic and probably accurate evidence might have been obtained, the principal aim of those who were interested in the subject was rather to obtain a vivid description of the fighting than a critical account of the method exhibited; and if any inclination to criticism was felt, it was no doubt repressed by the knowledge that a fair hearing was hardly to be expected from a public which was entirely satisfied with the result and entirely devoted to their hero's memory. The profession, too, seems to have been only too ready to take for a universal rule anything once done under any circumstances by their invincible chief. Mr. Corbett has discovered in his examination of the Admiralty Signal Book issued in 1816 that the form of attack used for special reasons at Trafalgar was adopted into the code as one of general efficacy, and was even printed, or rather misprinted, there in a

manner which shows the true intention of Nelson's attack to have been entirely disregarded. Lastly, when discussion did take place, it was conducted under great difficulties. Not only was it still viewed with dislike by the patriotic public and with reluctance by the naval men who might have most usefully taken part in it, but it was not based upon a scientific study of the records. It is true that by 1846 Sir Harris Nicolas, in the seventh volume of his 'Despatches and Letters of Lord Nelson,' had printed a set of extracts from the Logs of the Ships engaged; but these extracts, made probably from hasty and inaccurate copies taken out by Lieutenants for the purpose of drawing their pay, differ continually from the originals preserved among the official papers in the Record Office; and it was only in 1900 that these originals, together with some still more important journals and letters, were examined, transcribed, and printed for the Navy Records Society by Rear-Admiral T. Sturges Jackson, upon whose invaluable work all subsequent writers must base their arguments.

It may therefore be fairly said that for a hundred years after the battle no one who was both qualified to judge and was also furnished with the best evidence available has ever undertaken to find a definite answer to the three questions we are about to consider—namely, how far the actual attack followed out or diverged from the plan shown in the Secret Memorandum; if it so diverged, what was Nelson's reason for the change; and in what light we are to regard the method he employed, looking at it as an example of naval tactics.

The first step will be to examine the accounts of the battle, to ascertain, if possible, how the attack was actually delivered. It may seem strange that there should be any doubt about such a matter. The engagement was one long expected; thousands took part in it, fully realizing its immense importance, and afterwards shared in the lasting fame of its achievement. It might have been expected that not one but many accurate and minute accounts would appear at once. But a fight at sea is not so easily described, even by eye-witnesses, as a fight on land; and we know, from the Waterloo controversies, how a land battle on well-marked ground within easy reach may be the subject of hopelessly conflicting evidence, even when the historian has such material at his disposal as that which Captain Siborne was permitted to collect from the officers engaged. The testimony of naval men still actively employed was not so readily available; they were scattered over the world, and the world was wider in the days when an Admiral might be two years 'from setting foot out of his ship' and four or five away from England. Moreover, there was a special difficulty in the way of a clear view of Trafalgar. The plan upon which it was to be fought having been explained to all the Captains, and repeatedly discussed for three weeks by every officer in the Fleet, there would be a perfectly natural inclination in the minds of the majority to view every detail in the light of that plan, and even to correct their own judgment by it; while the more critical intellects, if once seized by the conviction that the plan had not been completely followed, would be

drawn into a contradictory attitude, and would magnify differences of minor importance.

This, in fact, seems to have been what actually occurred. It was maintained by some that Nelson followed substantially the plan laid down by him beforehand; by others, that he entirely abandoned it. Those who have written upon the subject have for the most part either quoted the plan and then left the details of the action sufficiently vague to enable the reader to believe it to have been carried out, or they have definitely and argumentatively adopted the contrary position. Between these two opinions we shall presently try to steer our course; in the meantime, there is a third position which, however untenable, must be at least mentioned because of the wide circulation of the work in which it is defended. The author of 'James's Naval History' stands alone among the reputable historians of the battle in maintaining that the alleged difference between the plan and the actual tactics is to be explained away by supposing the most important sentence in the Secret Memorandum to contain a clerical error, whereby an attack intended to be made, and eventually, in fact, made, in line ahead appears to be prescribed as an attack in line abreast. Happily the new evidence now available adds materially to our power of dealing with this as well as the other questions, besides diminishing the natural reluctance of a layman to put forward his own opinion on technical points.

Let us turn first to the Secret Memorandum, already printed in full on pp. 30-33. It would seem that nothing

could well be plainer than the method of attack prescribed in this document. Sailing from to windward—its position at Trafalgar—the British Fleet was to approach in three divisions, until within gunshot of the Enemy's Centre. 'The signal will most probably then be made for the Lee Line to bear up together, to set all their sails, even steering sails, in order to get as quickly as possible to the Enemy's Line, and to cut through, beginning from the twelfth ship from the Enemy's Rear. Some ships may not get through their exact place, but they will always be at hand to assist their friends, and if any are thrown round the Rear of the Enemy, they will effectually complete the business of twelve Sail of the Enemy. . . . The remainder of the Enemy's Fleet, thirty-four Sail, are to be left to the management of the Commander-in-Chief, who will endeavour to take care that the movements of the Second in Command are as little interrupted as is possible.'

A modification of this plan is tacitly, if not expressly, admitted on all hands to have been made on the day of battle. Since the Enemy's force actually consisted of thirty-three of the line, and Nelson's of twenty-seven, instead of forty-six and forty, as anticipated, the Advanced Squadron or Squadron of Observation shown in the Memorandum, was merged in the other two divisions of the British Fleet, and the twenty-seven Ships were divided into two Squadrons only—a weather division of twelve under Nelson, and a lee division of fifteen under Collingwood.

But, setting aside this modification, the meaning of

the Memorandum has seemed plain to every writer except James. Nelson intended his lee line or division to 'bear up together'—that is, to sail before the wind in line abreast, or 'on a line of bearing'—and the ships were to 'cut through' the Enemy's line, if possible, 'in their exact places.' Some might fail to do this, and others, since there were to be more of them than of the ships which they attacked, might be 'thrown round the Rear of the Enemy'; but all would know what to do: they would 'assist their friends,' and 'effectually complete the business of twelve Sail of the Enemy.' James, however, in the firm belief that the attack was actually made in column, or line ahead, and that Nelson's consistency must be vindicated at any cost, is determined to prove that this is the tactically superior formation, and that this and no other was intended and laid down by the Commander-in-Chief beforehand. To do this he is driven to read the words 'for the Lee Line to bear up together' as 'for the Three Lines to bear up together,' and to interpret this imaginary phrase as meaning that the three divisions were simultaneously to abandon the line abreast formation, shown by the diagram contained in the Memorandum, and to complete the attack in three columns parallel to one another. The actual tactics of the battle would thus be identical with the final stage at least of those laid down beforehand, save for the unimportant substitution of two columns for three.

It does not appear that this reckless contention has found support from other historians. It is certainly impossible to reconcile it satisfactorily with the actual

words of the Memorandum, or with the fact that that document was issued in manuscript copies to the Captains, and was explained to them by Nelson himself, so that a clerical error of the first importance must have been instantly detected. James himself endeavours to give it colour by a sentence which is either disingenuous or shows a striking inability to realize the difference between what is and what is not evidence. 'There are, we believe,' he says, 'very few of the Captains present in the Trafalgar battle with whom we have not conversed or corresponded, and yet no one of them has ever raised a doubt as to the meaning of Lord Nelson's instructions, or the manner in which he proposed to bear down on the Enemy's line.' Now, when these words were written more than twenty of the Captains present in the action were still living, and could have given a plain answer to the question, 'Did you or do you understand the Memorandum to prescribe an attack in column, or in line abreast?' Not a word, however, is given of evidence from them, written or spoken; but they are ambiguously stated to have never 'raised a doubt as to the meaning of Lord Nelson's instructions.'

Our new evidence enables us to make short work of this equivocation. The definite statement which James neglected to procure we now have direct from the pen of Captain Moorsom, of the *Revenge*. In a letter written to his father on December 4th, 1805, he says: 'I have seen several plans of the action, but none to answer my ideas of it. A regular plan was laid down by Lord Nelson some time before the action, but not acted

upon.' Captain Moorsom — afterwards Admiral Sir Robert Moorsom K.C.B., and a Lord of the Admiralty —who carried 'the Great Banner' at Nelson's funeral, was one of his best and most intelligent officers, and we shall do well to pass away from further examining the extreme position into which James's partizanship led him, to consider what the Captain of the *Revenge* took to be the real difference between the tactics of the Secret Memorandum and those of the actual battle.

It is at first sight bewildering, but upon further consideration most illuminating, to discover that he uses expressions which might be quoted, some on one side, some on the other, of the main controversy. In another letter, which, with the one above quoted, will be found in Admiral Sturges Jackson's 'Great Sea Fights' (Navy Records Society, 1900), Captain Moorsom, writing from Gibraltar on November 1st, 1805—only ten days after the battle—gives the following description of the beginning of the engagement: 'I will endeavour as near as I can to describe the mode of attack, though I could myself only see what passed in that part of the line I was in. . . . The wind all the morning was light from the N.W., sometimes calm, and about noon a light breeze about W.S.W. The Enemy's fleet bore about East. As we approached them they formed their line on the larboard tack with their heads to the Northward, and we kept going down in two columns pointing to the centre. All our ships were carrying studding sails, and many bad sailers a long way astern, but little or no stop was made for them.' So far this account, it is hardly necessary to

point out, is in accordance with much evidence already well known. The log of the *Royal Sovereign* records the 'signal to chase and form the line of battle in two columns.' The *Euryalus* at noon—that is, before the action commenced—'observed the *Royal Sovereign*, Admiral Collingwood, leading the lee line, bearing down on the Enemy's rear line. . . . Lord Nelson, leading the weather line, bore down on the Enemy's centre.' And soon afterwards the same log records that 'Admiral Collingwood and the headmost ships of his line broke through the rear of the Enemy's,' and goes on to speak of 'Lord Nelson and the headmost of the line he led into action.' To this we are now enabled to add that Collingwood's own Journal speaks of the 'Order of Sailing in two columns.' Captain Harvey, of the *Téméraire*, writes to his wife two days after the battle: 'We bore down on the Enemy in two columns, the weather column led by the Commander-in-Chief, the lee one by Vice-Admiral Collingwood, which occasioned my being astern instead of ahead of the *Victory*.' The *Britannia's* Journal says that Nelson 'was close followed up by the *Téméraire*, *Neptune*, *Conqueror*, *Leviathan* and this ship.' Apart from the general use of the word 'column,' these and other accounts seem to make it clear that it is here intended to bear the sense of 'line ahead,' whether that line was exactly kept or not. And if there were any doubt on the point, it would be probably laid to rest by the evidence of Lieutenant George L. Browne, of the *Victory*, who in a very interesting letter of December the 4th, 1805, also printed by Admiral Sturges

Jackson, explains that Collingwood and Nelson 'led their separate divisions, well knowing that a British seaman will always follow and support his leader,' and after adding that 'it has been usual . . . to place the fleets parallel to each other,' so that 'consequently two fleets of an equal number of ships would have a marked opponent,' goes on to point out the loss of time involved in so doing, and the superiority in this respect of the method actually adopted by Lord Nelson.

We have here reached a definite stage in our argument. On the evidence so far submitted we find, in agreement with all the principal writers who have described the action, that in the Secret Memorandum of October the 9th an attack in line abreast was planned; but that this plan was 'not acted upon,' an attack in column being ordered instead. It is from this point onwards that we believe the battle to have been inadequately treated. The type of action having been, as it was supposed, definitely ascertained, it was assumed to have been rigidly carried through by a Commander-in-Chief and a set of Captains acting with the unalterable precision of automatons, under conditions as frictionless as those postulated by the mathematician. The result has been that the accepted view of the Trafalgar attack has long been that illustrated by the plan prefixed to the seventh volume of the 'Despatches and Letters,' in which the British Fleet is shown in two almost parallel columns, both impinging perpendicularly upon the Enemy's line. We say 'almost parallel,' because in that plan, while the heads of the two columns are exactly parallel to each

other, six of the rear ships of the lee column are represented as coming in from the South, and are therefore slightly further away from the weather column than their fellows are. This recognition of a divergence from the exact perpendicular line ahead in Collingwood's column is important, and shows that Sir Harris Nicolas had been rightly, if not thoroughly, informed; but it was overlooked by Captain Mahan when he prepared the plan given at p. 371 of the second volume of his 'Life of Nelson.' In this he represents the two columns as exactly parallel and in exact line ahead; and though he does speak in the text of their irregular formation 'in two elongated groups,' he shows no sign of realizing the extent and significance of the irregularity.

For evidence that neither Sir Harris Nicolas nor Captain Mahan has grasped the details of the attack we have not far to go. The log of the *Royal Sovereign* adds to the signal already quoted, to 'form the line of battle in two columns,' the words 'each ship to engage her opponent.' This is a sufficiently startling expression, for it would apply exactly to an attack made in line abreast, and could not apply at all to an attack made at right angles and in direct line ahead, where all the ships must eventually pass through the same gap in the Enemy's line. Startling as it is and unsupported by the logs of the other ships, several of which record the number of the signal for two columns without any addition of the kind, it is paralleled by a sentence in Collingwood's own Journal. Before eleven o'clock, he says, 'we made the signal for the lee division to form

the larboard line of bearing, and to make more sail.' In this he is borne out by Captain Moorsom, who writes of his own ship: '*Revenge* got through between the fifth and sixth ships from their rear. . . . My station was the sixth ship in the rear of the lee column, but as the *Revenge* sailed well, Admiral Collingwood made my signal to keep a line of bearing from him, which made me one of the leading ships through the Enemy's line.' The log of the *Revenge* estimates the time as follows: 'At 12.25 *Royal Sovereign* commenced action in the centre. At 12.35 *Revenge* commenced, etc., in the rear.' That is to say, that within ten minutes of Collingwood's engaging, the tenth ship in the column was also in action, going 'through the Enemy's line,' and that, too, not near her leader, but between the fifth and sixth ships from the Enemy's rear, or in the very position to which she would be led by the order 'each ship to engage her opponent.' And this position she reached by sailing on 'a line of bearing from' the Admiral.

The evidence just quoted was either never in the hands of Southey, James, Clarke, Sir Harris Nicolas, or Captain Mahan, or it was neglected by them. James's description of the battle, which we have already given, contains a sentence which, while it accords as far as it goes with the remarks of Collingwood and Moorsom, shows that the writer had not given any great attention to the movements of the lee division from a tactical point of view, or that he was disinclined to examine too closely into details which would be difficult to reconcile with his own preconceptions. 'Owing,' he says, 'to some of the ships astern of the *Fougueux*

pressing forward to support the centre, while others remained with their sails aback or shivering, the Franco-Spanish line (if line we must call it) was becoming even more irregular than it had been. The slanting direction in which, on account of this movement, the British lee column was obliged to advance, enabled the ships to discharge their starboard guns at the Enemy's rear, and an interchange of animated firing ensued, the smoke from which, for the want of a breeze to carry it off, spread its murky mantle over the combatants.' If the writer of this passage had been able to view the tactical problem with an open mind, it is impossible that he should have spoken of 'the slanting direction' as caused directly by the movement of the Enemy's rear line, and ignored the signal for 'each ship to engage her opponent'; nor would he have been content to remark, as he does upon a later page, that 'the remainder (of Collingwood's ships) successively, as they came up, pierced the mass of Enemy's ships in various directions, and found opponents as they could.' It must be remembered, however, that probably he, too, had before him neither Collingwood's Journal nor Moorsom's letters.

Admiral Sturges Jackson, of course, had both, and he has not failed to note the bearing of the passages we have quoted from them. He does not, however, in his short introductory chapter to the Trafalgar documents, endeavour to go into the matter with anything like completeness, but dismisses it with a single paragraph, coming no nearer to a conclusion than the following sentences: 'It is certain that the line of bearing was never correctly formed by either division. Some of the

rear ships in each column did not get into action till between two and three hours after their leaders. Such delay would have inevitably insured the trial of their Captains by court-martial had the fleet been ranged in lines parallel to that of the enemy. But the private accounts of the battle contained in this volume contain direct proof that the fleet were not so formed.' This obviously does not profess to be a complete summary of the evidence; it takes no account of a possible difference between the method of sailing in the weather and lee columns respectively; it admits the line of bearing in the lee division, but denies that it was correctly formed, or that the fleet as a whole was ever 'ranged in lines parallel to that of the enemy,' though it does not suggest how the fleet actually was ranged at any given moment of the action, or inquire whether its first formation was, in fact, altered in accordance with Collingwood's orders, as recorded by himself. Admiral Jackson, in short, is not making a tactical study of the battle; he is introducing his documents to the reader, and confines himself to pointing out certain passages in them which bear on the tactical controversy. We shall be guilty of no presumption then, if, while accepting his propositions as accurate in themselves, we claim to go beyond them in the hope of completing a theory which will satisfactorily account for all the facts.

The most salient fact at present before us is, as we have seen, that while the general formation of the fleet for the attack was to be in two columns, yet Collingwood claims to have given, and Moorsom acknowledges

to have received, an order to form a line of bearing in the lee division. If we examine the logs of the ships in that division, we shall find further evidence in support of this. The times at which the several ships claim to have commenced action or engaged the enemy show clearly that they cannot all have been following one another in line ahead. It is, of course, well known that no reliance can be placed upon the log of any ship present in the battle for the correct time at which any event of the day occurred, for they almost all differ, as may be seen by taking the time assigned by each to any one event. But though we cannot hope to find the *absolute* time at which anything occurred, we can, by taking some marked event as a starting-point or standard, obtain a series of fairly correct *relative* times for the performances of the individual ships. If, for example, we select as our starting-point the moment, eagerly awaited and marked by all without any kind of interruption, when the *Royal Sovereign* opened fire, we can find the number of minutes which each ship estimates to have passed between that moment and her own first entry into action. Thus, the *Belleisle* claims to have engaged 8 minutes later than the *Royal Sovereign ;* the *Mars*, 13 minutes ; the *Tonnant*, 33 ; the *Bellerophon*, 15 ; the *Colossus*, 20 ; the *Achille*, 15 ; the *Revenge*, 10 ; the *Polyphemus*, about 50 ; the *Defiance*, 75 ; the *Dreadnought*, 73 ; the *Defence*, 128. The *Prince* was undoubtedly last, nearly three hours behind ; *Swiftsure* and *Thunderer* name no time. Further, these entries are often significantly expressed. The *Colossus*, ten minutes after opening fire, 'passed our opponent in

the Enemy's line'; the *Defiance* began by engaging 'the third from the Enemy's rear'; the *Revenge*, as we have seen, 'got through between the fifth and sixth from the rear'; the *Swiftsure* roundly notes, 'by half-past noon the whole fleet in action, and *Royal Sovereign* had cut through the enemy's line.' A more exact and decidedly significant account of the *Swiftsure's* own position is to be found in an unpublished letter from one of her officers, Lieutenant G. A. Barker (Brit. Mus. Add. MSS., 30,170): 'At half-past twelve the *Royal Sovereign*, Vice-Admiral Collingwood, commenced the action with the fire of *Thunderer*, breaking through the Enemy's line; the different Ships that could bring their guns to bear upon her returned the fire in every direction. In the course of half an hour the smoke which had surrounded the *Royal Sovereign* cleared away, and we had the pleasure of seeing several of the Enemy's Ships completely dismasted. The *Victory* was to be observed at this time in the heat of the action with her mizen-topmast shot away. We were now nearly alongside of the Enemy's Rear Ships, which were engaged but partially.'

It will be seen at once that of the ships in the lee division no less than nine were engaged within thirty-three minutes of the first British gun being fired, and, further, that the order in which they engaged is not the order in which they appear in the Order of Sailing in column. The *Revenge*, ninth in the column, is 'one of the leading ships through the enemy's line,' engaging almost at the same moment as the *Belleisle*, the second in place. *Mars* is fourth instead of third. *Bellerophon*

and *Achille*, originally fifth and seventh, are both in action before *Tonnant*, fourth in the column. No doubt these times must not be too unreservedly accepted; but they are more likely to be accurate than the later times, noted during the stress of action, and they are, as we have pointed out, not *absolute* times, depending on the correctness of a particular watch, but *relative* times, each got by two observations of the same watch at a short interval.

Secondly, it is to be observed that the ships of this division do not pass one after another through the same gap in the enemy's line, but, generally speaking, attack different ships, or successively engage the same ship when it is changing its position in that line. Lastly, the effect produced upon the mind of undisturbed spectators in the rear, on board the *Swiftsure*, is that Collingwood's division, speaking roundly, was in action within half an hour and 'nearly alongside of the Enemy's Rear Ships.' In short, Captain Moorsom's account is confirmed, and it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that the lee division, at any rate, while it began by approaching the enemy in column, soon changed formation to a line of bearing, not kept or intended to be kept with accuracy, but ordered by Collingwood with the intention of giving the faster sailing ships the opportunity of using their full powers, and laying themselves as quickly as possible each alongside of 'her opponent in the enemy's line.' That such an order was within his rights and in accordance with Nelson's *general* instructions we know from Collingwood's own letter to Sir Thomas Pasley, written on

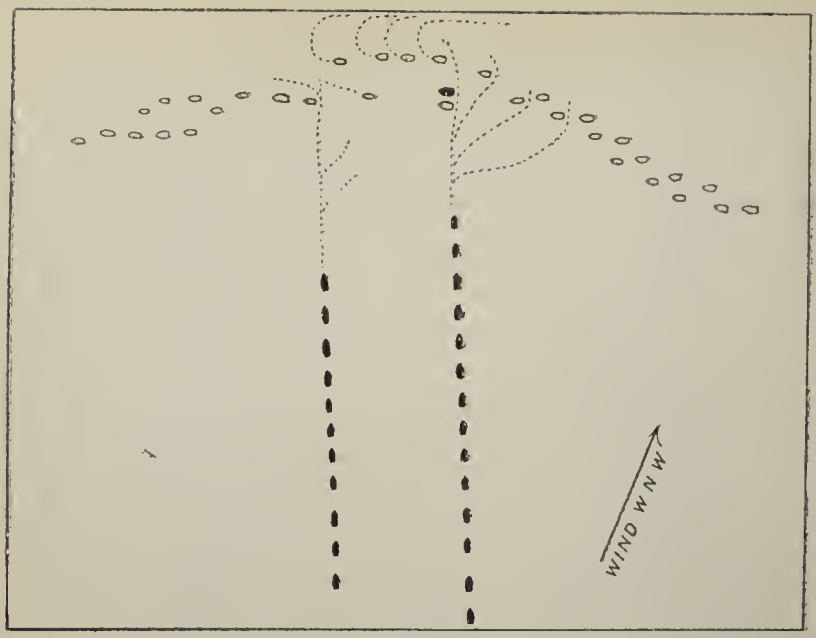
December the 16th, 1805. 'Lord Nelson,' he writes, 'determined to substitute for exact order an impetuous attack in two distinct bodies. The Weather Line he commanded, and left the Lee Line totally to my direction.'

What, then, of the weather division? Was their formation changed to the same extent? No; for their purpose was a different one. The lee division was to be used entirely for attack; the sooner and the more simultaneously the ships struck home the better. Nelson's own division was also for attack—partly; but partly, too, it was a Squadron of Observation, told off to see that the action in the rear was not 'interrupted.' Its functions, therefore, were to overpower the enemy's Commander-in-Chief by a concentration upon him, and at the same time to sever his van entirely from the rest of his line. For this purpose it was evidently more effectual, though it involved the risk of heavy loss, to keep the ships in line ahead, or, at any rate, in a column, moving perpendicularly down upon the same point of attack. Of course, here, too, every moment saved was of the greatest importance, and we know that Nelson, though he could not give up the privilege of being the first to float in upon 'the full tide of happiness,' was anxious to get the raking over as quickly as possible. 'This is too warm work to last long,' he said, as the shot struck the *Victory* time after time before her own guns could be brought to bear in reply; and there is no doubt that by these words, whether rightly reported or not, he meant that the position was too hot for any ship to endure it long

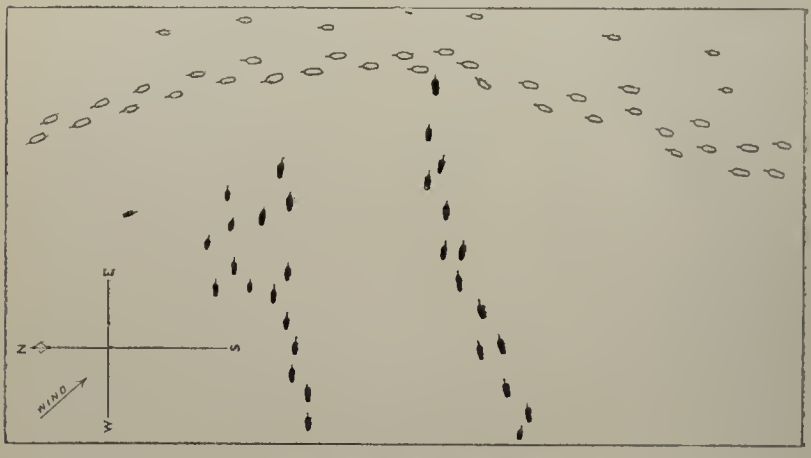
without being crippled, and delaying the whole division from coming to close action.

The same anxiety had been in his mind when he dismissed the Frigate Captains a few minutes before. 'When Lord Nelson,' says Blackwood, 'found the shot pass over the *Victory*, he desired Captain Prowse of the *Sirius* and myself to go on board our ships, and in our way to tell all the Captains of Line-of-Battle ships that he depended on their exertions, and that if by the mode of attack prescribed they found it impracticable to get into action immediately, they might adopt whatever they thought best, provided it led them quickly and closely alongside an Enemy.' That this order was carried out we see from the log of the *Spartiate*, the last and slowest ship in Nelson's division. About twenty-four minutes after the *Royal Sovereign* opened fire it records that there 'came on board a Lieutenant from H.M.S. *Euryalus* with orders to pass through the line wherever we could engage with most effect.'

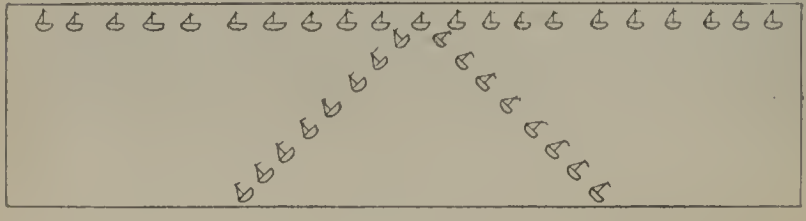
It is now time to return to the diagrams which have been published by the different historians to illustrate their accounts of the battle. There is but one among the well-known ones which is not destroyed as completely by the evidence we have quoted as the Enemy's line was broken by the attack at Trafalgar. That one is to be found at p. 296 of Professor Laughton's book, 'The Nelson Memorial,' of the value of which something has been said on an earlier page. In this plan the British Fleet is shown at noon attacking 'in two irregular lines,' or rather in two irregular lumps, as unlike rigid columns in line ahead as any formation



FROM MAHAN'S 'NELSON'



FROM SIR H. NICHOLAS.



SPANISH PLAN.

To face p. 95.

well could be. Dotted lines indicate that the ships of Collingwood's division are to 'spread out towards the south, breaking into the enemy's line in many different places,' and that the *Victory's* course is to take her first to larboard towards the ninth ship of the enemy's van, and then starboard again, so as to pass between the twelfth and fourteenth ships, as noted by Codrington and by her own log, which records that she 'opened fire upon the enemy's van in passing down their line.' The diagram does not claim to assign its exact place to every ship, either of the British or the Combined Fleets, and we shall endeavour to supplement it in this respect, but it bears evidence of a practical knowledge of the sea and of a grasp of the essential facts, which are the more striking when we turn to compare this with other plans of the action. The plain truth about the rest is that they have been based not upon facts, but upon terms. Each writer in succession has made the 'column' or 'line ahead' approximate more closely to the mathematical ideal of what a perfect line ahead should be, till we arrive at Captain Mahan's frankly conventional diagram, which bears about as much resemblance to the actual attack as the letter A does to a bull's head. This would matter little if the convention represented the essential outline; but, unfortunately, some of the most illuminating details have been obscured in the conventionalizing process, and the description of the battle, with the inferences from it, have suffered in consequence.

This process, as we should expect, is less visible in the earlier diagrams. Sir Harris Nicolas shows some

regard for the evidence before him; Admiral Ekins, in his 'Naval Battles,' published in 1826, has a plan which might have opened the eyes of subsequent writers if it had only been put forward with a less tentative and confusing accompaniment of text. It has, however, no great value for us, for it was not the work of an eye-witness, nor in itself an original conception, but was derived from another diagram of much greater interest and authority, of which a reproduction will be found opposite page 98. This plan, the earliest known, is taken from the fourteenth volume of the *Naval Chronicle* (1805), where it is stated to be 'Copied from the original in the possession of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty,' and the further note is appended that 'the situation of the Combined Fleet, as here represented, has been vouched to be correct by Admiral Villeneuve, in the original sent to the Admiralty.' The chief feature in the 'situation of the Combined Fleet,' as here shown, is its division into a line of battle under Villeneuve, and a second line or Squadron of Observation under Gravina. The double formation of the Franco-Spanish ships at the moment of attack is now generally admitted to have been formed by the drawing in of Gravina's squadron, so as to block the intervals in the first line. Villeneuve, in vouching for the correctness of this diagram, must be simply guaranteeing that the Combined Fleet was actually so placed before the action, not that it continued so till battle was joined; for we know that Collingwood, in fact, cut off twelve ships of the enemy's rear, whereas the diagram shows only four of the enemy to rearward

of the place where he is about to cut the line. These four ships are lying towards the south-west at an angle or curve from the main line, and if we picture their formation reinforced and extended, as it is known to have been, by eight of Gravina's ships, we shall see at a glance why Collingwood gave the order to form a line of bearing, and how it was that the *Revenge* got to work only ten minutes after him. The fact is that the rear of the English lee division was not perpendicular at all to the line of the rearmost ships of the enemy: it was more nearly abreast of them, and the line of bearing was therefore the shortest way into action. James, minimizing, as usual, every piece of evidence that could interfere with his theory of an attack planned, ordered, and completed in line ahead, assigns to this movement a later time, 'towards the height of the battle,' which is inconsistent with the facts plainly stated by Moorsom and the log of the *Royal Sovereign*, as well as by Collingwood's own Journal, which enters the signal for the line of bearing before Nelson's signal to prepare to anchor. This last Collingwood times as having been made at eleven o'clock; but the *Euryalus*, a more reliable timekeeper, records it at noon, or seventeen minutes before the *Royal Sovereign* opened fire, and twenty-two before she cut the line. In any case the line of bearing was formed in time to produce an attack 'upon the whole of the enemy's rear,' and it was formed in obedience to a signal from Collingwood, and not merely in pursuance of a 'discretionary power' or 'verbal directions' from Nelson, 'transmitted through the Captains of the frigates'; these 'verbal directions'

having been given, as we have shown, not as James expresses it 'on the morning of the action,' but at the last possible moment, when the *Victory* was already under fire. They probably were only intended for, and certainly only reached, the ships of Nelson's own division.

In the diagram we are now considering it will be noticed that the two lines of the British columns converge towards one another. This is a detail of their manœuvring which is not to be seen in the later plans, but which was probably even more accentuated, in fact, than in our diagram; for even this shows the conventional tendency, though in a comparatively slight degree. The truth about the actual formation may be inferred from the two unique plans which accompany the full diagram, and show the position of the British fleet at daylight and at nine o'clock. The two divisions lie in two irregular crescents, the inner horn of each being slightly advanced towards the Enemy. We have only to picture these inner horns, tipped by the *Victory* and *Royal Sovereign*, heading the advance of the two shapeless divisions, which begin very slowly in the light and variable wind to form two elongated curves. From the moment when the two leading ships have arrived opposite their respective points of attack in the Franco-Spanish line, they steer a course parallel to each other (save for Nelson's temporary deviation) and perpendicular to the enemy; but while the rear ships are gradually stringing themselves out on the two long curves behind their leaders, each division receives a final order from its Commander, which prevents the

PLAN FROM THE 'NAVAL CHRONICLE,' VOL. XIV.

To face p. 98.

line-ahead formation from ever being perfectly attained. Collingwood, finding his division lying practically alongside the enemy's curving rear, signals to keep a line of bearing, and leads only his immediate followers towards his own gap. Nelson, somewhat later, turns his own column's advance into a go-as-you-please dash for the Enemy's heart. The result is a heavy loss on board the leading ships, but a tremendous shock upon both rear and centre of the enemy; and the belated slow sailers in the rear of the weather column come up, as no doubt Nelson foresaw they would, just in time to intercept and beat off the counterstroke of the van under Dumanoir, and to capture one of his five ships. It is worth while to add that this view of the engagement gains some further support from the Spanish diagram of the battle, reproduced by Sir Harris Nicolas from the Egerton MS. (382) in the British Museum (facing p. 95). This diagram, though quite as conventional an example of mathematical precision as any of our English ones, is in one respect at least superior to them. The draughtsman, not having the English Commander-in-Chief's orders to base his pattern upon, has conventionalized from a single observed fact—namely, the converging movement above described. He thus represents the English as 'formed into a wedge'—that is, he makes the two rigid columns into a **V**, at the point of which the centre ship of the Allied Line is attacked simultaneously by the *Victory* and the *Royal Sovereign*. The remaining English ships are then shown as being thrown round so as to close in a figure-of-eight upon a few French and Spanish ships to right

and left of the centre, leaving the Allied van and extreme rear both out of action.

The plan given in G. L. Newnham Collingwood's 'Correspondence of Lord Collingwood' is expressly stated to be 'taken, with slight alteration,' from that prefixed by Sir Harris Nicolas to his seventh volume. The compiler adds that the *Revenge*, acting on a signal from Lord Collingwood, became the leading ship in a second line, instead of following in the Admiral's wake. This would make the attack merely an affair of three columns instead of two. No evidence is cited in defence of this theory, and the only interest attaching to it is the fact that, while Mr. Collingwood had evidently been informed by someone that the *Revenge* was ordered to keep a line of bearing, he had not read the Admiral's own Journal, in which the signal is given as applying to 'the lee division,' and not only to the *Revenge*.

Lastly, there are in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 23,618) two plans of the battle, among a series of military drawings made in 1830 by Lieut.-Colonel C. H. Smith. The two are on the same page. One is a purely conventional line-ahead diagram; the other is evidently a copy of the one reproduced in the *Naval Chronicle*, of which we have already spoken. The insertion of these two inconsistent plans side by side, and without a word of comment, is eloquent of the sagacity of Lieut.-Colonel Smith, and of the general lack of good evidence about the battle a quarter of a century after it took place. Nelson's contemporaries had thrown away their opportunity; they had made no thorough

study of the Trafalgar attack, no collection of first-hand evidence. The precise among them feasted on the imaginations of the geometrical draughtsman; those of a more sporting turn fondly repeated good old naval phrases such as that used by Lieutenant Benjamin Clement, of the *Tonnant;* 'We went down in no order, but every Man to take his Bird.'

CHAPTER VII

THE TACTICS OF TRAFALGAR (*continued*)

THE remainder of our inquiry is concerned with two questions which can hardly be treated apart from one another. It is true that we should naturally wish to discover, if possible, why Nelson departed from the tactics he had laid down, before pronouncing upon his conduct of the action as a whole. But, as it happens, this is a matter of difficulty and dispute, and it is only after considering the course of the action from beginning to end, and the effect of the tactics employed in it, that we can come to a decision as to the probable motive for their adoption.

James, as we have seen, was so dazzled by the result of the battle and so blindly devoted to Nelson's reputation, that he would allow no one to question either the superiority of the attack as delivered over all other possible formations, or the consistent adoption of it by the Commander-in-Chief from first to last, in the Secret Memorandum as well as at the supreme moment when his enemy lay before him. He was in particular very severe upon a fellow-critic, Admiral Ekins, and charged him with having in his 'Naval Battles' 'entirely mis-

understood the principle upon which the Battle of Trafalgar was fought.' So far as concerns the first point in the controversy between these two writers, we have already urged a decision in Ekins' favour: the attack which Nelson designed in line abreast he eventually led in column. But this does not dispose of the whole matter on either side. James ('Naval History,' iv. 144) argues as follows: 'The confidential friends of Lord Nelson, many of whom are now living, can testify that he had the strongest objection to the plan of bearing up in line abreast, and that he attributed the partial success of Lord Howe on the 1st of June to his having adopted that mode of attack. His own plan appears to have been to bring his force in the most effective state into contact with the force of the Enemy, and for that purpose to present, while advancing to close, the smallest possible front to the Enemy's fire.'

This paragraph, it will be seen, contains some highly disputable matter. It is followed by a still more interesting one: 'In order to make quick as well as decisive work of it, Lord Nelson proposed, in the first instance, cutting off a portion of the Enemy's line. He then left everything to the valour and address of his Captains, well observing that no Captain could do very wrong who placed his ship alongside that of an enemy. The greater the confusion the greater were his hopes of success, because he knew that the British, besides being better prepared for fighting their guns on either side or in any direction, were better skilled in working their ships than the French or Spaniards. A

gale of wind or a dark night was accordingly considered as a ship or two in his favour. The reason that Lord Nelson gave for placing so little dependence upon evolutions was that he generally found the inconvenience which resulted from the mistakes too frequently made, to outweigh the benefit expected to be derived from the most correct performance of the manœuvre. Hence the sum of Lord Nelson's tactics was to close his enemy, and to overpower and annihilate him as quickly as possible.'

The advantages here claimed for the attack in column are four in number: (1) That it exposes the smallest possible front to the enemy's fire; (2) that it is quicker; (3) that it creates a confusion advantageous to the better seamen; (4) that it is free from complication and danger of mistakes. Let us see what support can be found for these contentions, or any of them, in the letters of those present in the action.

Lieutenant Browne of the *Victory*, in the letter of December 4th, 1805, from which we have already quoted, gives the following view of the attack. Speaking of the usual plan of forming line abreast, and placing the fleet parallel with that of the enemy, he says: 'This line of conduct, though heretofore general, has always caused great delay. Fleets have sometimes been in sight of each other for two or three days without being able so completely to form as to risk an action. But by his Lordship's mode of attack you will clearly perceive not an instant of time could be lost; the action would commence as soon as we could arrive up with the enemy. His Lordship's superior arrange-

ment left nothing to be done by signals. The frequent communications he had with his Admirals and Captains put them in possession of all his plans, so that his mode of attack was well known to every officer of the fleet. No doubt this action, from the novelty of the attack, will be more discussed than any that has ever been fought. Some will not fail to attribute rashness to the conduct of my Lord Nelson. But he well considered the importance of a decisive naval victory at this crisis, and has frequently said since we left England that should he be so fortunate as to fall in with the enemy a total defeat should be the result *on the one side or the other*.'

Admiral Sturges Jackson, in a note appended to this passage, comments rather severely on the latter part of it, as showing that even the assistant flag-lieutenant on Nelson's own ship had failed to grasp the principle of concentration on a part of the enemy's line. But I take this principle, though not stated, to be referred to in the words, 'his mode of attack was well known to every officer of the fleet.' It could not be the formation of the fleet that was 'well known' beforehand, for that was changed at the last moment from line abreast to column, as we have seen; but Nelson's 'frequent communications' were based on the Secret Memorandum, and of this document Professor Laughton has well said: 'No clearer exposition of tactical principles was ever penned; and though under the force of circumstances some of the details prescribed in the Memorandum were departed from, the leading idea of crushing the enemy's rear with the lee line and over-

awing the enemy's van with the weather line was very exactly adhered to.' It is to this Memorandum, and it must be to the principles, and not the details, contained in it, that Lieutenant Browne is referring in the words his 'mode of attack,' a mode which when once the action had commenced 'left nothing to be done by signals.'

Granting, then, the intelligence and competence of this officer of the *Victory*, what is the opinion we get from him? Clearly, that the Trafalgar tactics, though perhaps rash, were intended to save time and insure a close and decisive action. Collingwood is still more emphatic on the same point. 'You know,' he writes to Sir Thomas Pasley, 'what time is required to form a regular line of Battle. Lord Nelson determined to substitute for exact order an impetuous attack in two distinct bodies. . . . It was executed well and succeeded admirably. Probably its novelty was favourable to us, for the enemy looked for a time when we should form something like a Line.'

Lastly, we have an important piece of evidence to show that Nelson, even before he sailed from England, and when he had, so far as we know, never considered even the possibility of a perpendicular attack in column, was already impressed with the waste of time involved in the orthodox tactics of the day, and hoped to increase the suddenness of his attack by dividing his line into three, and giving a large discretion to a subordinate commander. The following is a 'Memorandum of a conversation between Lord Nelson and Admiral Sir Richard Keats, the last time

he was in England, before the Battle of Trafalgar,' communicated by Keats to Mr. Edward Hawke Locker, and transcribed by him on the 1st of October, 1829:

'One morning, walking with Lord Nelson in the grounds at Merton, talking on naval matters, he said to me: "No day can be long enough to arrange a couple of fleets and fight a decisive battle, according to the old system. When *we* meet them" [I was to have been with him] "for meet them we shall, I'll tell you how I shall fight them. I shall form the Fleet into three Divisions in three Lines. One Division shall be composed of twelve or fourteen of the fastest two-decked Ships, which I shall keep always to windward, or in a situation of advantage; and I shall put them under an Officer who, I am sure, will employ them in the manner I wish, if possible. I consider it will always be in my power to throw them into Battle in any part I may choose; but if circumstances prevent their being carried against the Enemy where I desire, I shall feel certain he will employ them effectually, and perhaps in a more advantageous manner than if he could have followed my orders." (He never mentioned or gave any hint by which I could understand who it was he intended for this distinguished service.) He continued: "With the remaining part of the Fleet formed in two lines, I shall go at them at once, if I can, about one-third of their line from their leading Ship." He then said: "What do you think of it?" Such a question I felt required consideration. I paused. Seeing it, he said: "But I'll tell you what *I* think of

it. I think it will surprise and confound the Enemy. They won't know what I am about. It will bring forward a pell-mell Battle, and that is what I want." '

This statement agrees exactly with Collingwood's letter, and also affords support to Browne's. Clearly in Nelson's opinion the forming of the orthodox line of battle was a tedious manœuvre which often let the chance go by; he had from the first determined to shorten it and bring on what Collingwood afterwards described as 'a severe action, no dodging or manœuvring,' by breaking up his own force. So far, then, there is some evidence in support of James's second proposition that the formation in column was adopted for the sake of quickness. Browne states it decidedly, and it must be remembered that when he wrote he had had, since the battle, more than a month in which to discuss the attack with his fellow-officers of the *Victory*, the very ship which had been sacrificed to gain Nelson's object, whatever that was. Collingwood's opinion is even more decisive. Further, we may say that the evidence is not inconsistent with James's third and fourth contentions. But in suggesting that one of the advantages of an attack in column is the exposing of a smaller front to the enemy's fire, James stands, and will probably always stand, alone. In the days when a ship's offensive power was practically confined to broadside fire, the most desirable thing was to be in a position to rake, the least desirable was to be raked. To advance against a line of the enemy at right angles, and in line ahead, was the most dangerous thing, given fairly equal gunnery on both sides, that a commander

could possibly do; it was giving the enemy his most coveted advantage. The 'smaller front' might easily be crushed by the concentrated fire of the line; every ship, especially in a light breeze, might be crippled in turn before she could make any impression on the enemy. Nelson took this risk, and the risk of being blamed for doing so.

Criticism was, in fact, passed upon the method of attack; but unfortunately it was not for some years pressed home in public, and it was never fairly treated. Nelson—understood or misunderstood—was held to be beyond criticism, and in the end both the interests of the service and his own reputation naturally suffered for this refusal to look at the facts. The situation is clearly shown by the argument of Admiral Ekins, which was not published till twenty years after the battle, and which, inconclusive and apologetic as it is, was immediately shouted down in James's next edition. Ekins, while professing the warmest admiration for Nelson's conduct of the action, adds that 'it is well known to all the Captains of that fleet, that an attack from the windward was by previous concert to have been of a different and still more formidable nature. . . . The preconcerted plan of attack differed essentially from the real one, inasmuch as that (*i.e.*, the former) presumes the two lines to have borne up together. In the actual one they *afterwards* fell into line ahead, the ships in the wake of each other, in obedience to the signal made in conformity with a change of intention on the part of Lord Nelson. This, it would seem, can only be accounted for by his great impatience to be the leader

of his column and the first in battle; for certain it is that such change was made in the form of attack, the writer having been assured of it from the best authority.' Unfortunately, the statement about the knowledge of 'all the Captains in that fleet' is not accompanied by evidence from them, nor are we told who was 'the best authority' referred to. The Admiral does, however, give us one very useful document—a long communication from an able and intelligent officer, who was present in the action, evidently on board the *Conqueror*. The following passages are directly in point here, and form probably the best criticism ever published on the battle by one who took part in it:

'Of the advantages and disadvantages of the mode of attack adopted by the British Fleet it may be considered presumptuous to speak, as the event was so completely successful; but as the necessity of any particular experiment frequently depends upon contingent circumstances, not originally calculated upon, there can be no impropriety in questioning whether the same plan be likely to succeed under all circumstances, and on all occasions.

'If the regulated plan of attack had been adhered to, the English fleet should have borne up together, and have sailed in a line abreast in their respective divisions, until they arrived up with the enemy. Thus the plan which consideration had matured, would have been executed; than which perhaps nothing could be better; the victory would have been more speedily decided, and the brunt of the action would have been more equally felt. With the exception of the *Britannia*, *Dread-*

nought, and *Prince*, the body of the fleet sailed very equally, and I have no doubt could have been brought into action simultaneously with their leaders. This being granted, there was no time gained by attacking in line-ahead; the only reason, I could suppose, that occasioned the change.

'The advantages of an attack made in two great divisions, with a squadron of observation, seem to combine every necessary precaution under all circumstances. The power of bringing an overwhelming force against a particular point of an enemy's fleet, so as to ensure the certain capture of the ships attacked, and the power of condensing such a force afterwards as not only to protect the attacking ships from any offensive attempt that may be made by the unoccupied vessels of the hostile fleet, but also to secure the prizes already made, will most probably lead to a victory; and if followed up according to circumstances, may ultimately tend to the annihilation of the whole, or the great part, of the mutilated fleet. Each ship may use her superiority of sailing, without being so far removed from the inferior sailing ships as to lose their support. The swifter ships, passing rapidly through the enemy's fire, are less liable to be disabled, and after closing with their opponents, divert their attention from the inferior sailers, who are advancing to complete what their leaders had begun. The weather division, from being more distant, remain spectators of the first attack for some little time, according to the rate of the sailing, and may direct their attack, as they observe the failure or success of the first onset, either to support the lee division if required, or

to extend the success they may appear to have gained. If the enemy bear up to elude the attack, the attacking fleet is well collected for the commencement of a chase, and for mutual support in pursuit.

'The mode of attack adopted with such success in the Trafalgar action appears to me to have succeeded from the enthusiasm inspired throughout the British fleet; from their being commanded by their beloved Nelson; from the gallant conduct of the leaders of the two divisions; from the individual exertions of each ship after the attack commenced, and the superior practice of the guns in the English Fleet. It was successful also from the consternation spread through the combined fleet on finding the British so much stronger than was expected; from the astonishing and rapid destruction which followed the attack of the leaders, witnessed by the whole of the hostile fleets, inspiring the one and dispiriting the other, and from the loss of the Admiral's ship early in the action.

'The disadvantages of this mode of attack appear to consist in bringing forward the attacking force in a manner so leisurely and alternately, that an enemy of equal spirit and equal ability in seamanship and gunnery, would have annihilated the ships one after another in detail, carried slowly on as they were by a heavy swell and light airs. At the distance of one mile five ships at half a cable's length apart might direct their broadsides effectively against the head of the division for seven minutes, supposing the rate of sailing to have been four miles an hour, and within the distance of half a mile three ships would do the same for seven

minutes more, before the attacking ship could fire a gun in her defence. It is to be observed that although the hull of the headmost ship does certainly, in a great measure, cover the hulls of those astern, yet great injury is done to the masts and yards of the whole by the fire directed against the leader, and that if these ships are foiled in their attempt to cut through the enemy's line, or to run on board of them, they are placed, for the most part, *hors de combat* for the rest of the action. Or should it fall calm or the wind materially decrease about the moment of attack, the van ships must be sacrificed before the rear could possibly come to their assistance. In proceeding to the attack of the 21st of October, the weather was exactly such as might have caused this dilemma, as the sternmost ships of the British were six or seven miles distant. By the mode of attacking in detail, and the manner in which the Combined Fleet was drawn up to receive it, instead of doubling on the enemy, the British were on that day themselves doubled and trebled on, and the advantage of applying an overwhelming force collectively, it would seem, was totally lost. The *Victory*, *Téméraire*, *Sovereign*, *Belleisle*, *Mars*, *Colossus*, and *Bellerophon*, were placed in such situations in the onset that nothing but the most heroic gallantry and practical skill at their guns could have extricated them. If the enemy's vessels had closed up as they ought to have done, from van to rear, and had possessed a nearer equality in *active* courage, it is my opinion that even British skill and British gallantry could not have availed. The position of the Combined Fleet at one time was precisely that in which

the British were desirous of being placed, namely, to have part of an opposing fleet doubled on and separated from the main body. The French Admiral, with his fleet, showed the greatest *passive* gallantry; and certainly the French *Intrépide*, with some others, evinced *active* courage equal to the British; but there was no nautical management, no skilful manœuvring.

'It may appear presumptuous to have thus questioned the propriety of the Trafalgar attack, but it is only just to point out the advantages and disadvantages of every means that may be used for the attainment of great results, that the probabilities and existing circumstances may be well weighed before such means are applied. A plan, to be entirely correct, must be suited to all cases. If its infallibility is not thus established, there can be no impropriety in pointing out the errors and dangers to which it is exposed, for the benefit of others. Our heroic and lamented Chief knew his means and the power he had to deal with; he also knew the means he adopted were sufficient for the occasion, and that sufficed. The Trafalgar attack might be followed under different circumstances, and have a different result: it is right, therefore, to discuss its merits and demerits. It cannot take one atom from the fame of the departed hero, whose life was one continued scene of original ability, and of superior action.'

In the opinion of this critic, who has every right to be heard with attention, the doctrine of 'the smallest front' is a fallacious one. The leading ships ought to have been annihilated in detail before reaching the Enemy's line; and even after reaching it they were for

some time placed in a position which should have insured their destruction. In this he is supported indirectly by Collingwood and even by Nelson himself, as we have already seen. Both commanders were anxious to get their ships up as fast as possible; both evidently wished to shorten the time during which the leaders bore the brunt alone. The line ahead was abandoned by both before it had been fully formed. Their anxiety was justified by the result. The losses of the *Victory* and *Téméraire* amounted to 255 out of a total of 545 for the division; those of the *Royal Sovereign* and *Belleisle* to 267 out of 1,120. The *Royal Sovereign* was given up for lost by spectators in the rear, and was, in fact, an almost unmanageable hulk within forty minutes of opening fire.

'I am not certain,' says Captain Moorsom, 'that our mode of attack was the best; however, it succeeded.' Why did it succeed? The *Conqueror's* officer gives four good reasons: (1) Leadership; (2) enthusiasm; (3) exertions and good gunnery; (4) the consternation of the enemy at the unexpected numbers and destructive power of the English ships. The capture of the Commander-in-Chief was, he thinks, a fatally discouraging blow. But that Commander-in-Chief has himself recorded the paralyzing impression made still earlier by the mere sight of the British advance. Blackwood writes two days after the battle: 'Villeneuve says that he never saw anything like the irresistible line of our ships; but that of the *Victory*, supported by the *Neptune* and *Téméraire*, was what he could not have formed any judgment of.' The

first part of this remark seems to apply rather to the advance of the whole mass of ships deploying out of their columns towards their 'opponents in the line.' But the latter words must refer to the attack of the three ships named in line ahead, and they show that Villeneuve, at any rate, did not regard such a formation as utterly foolhardy. The opinion of another French officer, quoted by Professor Laughton in his 'Story of Trafalgar,' is also worth remembering. 'The complete success,' he says, 'of this mode of attack—contrary as it was to all established rules—proved that by sea as well as by land advantage ought to be taken of the individual circumstances. It is in this that the genius of the Commander will manifest itself. It may be asserted that at Trafalgar, as at the Nile, the merit of Nelson consisted less in the employment of this or that manœuvre than in the intelligent appreciation of the facts before him.' To this Professor Laughton adds that, in his opinion, 'there is no doubt that the overwhelming success at Trafalgar was achieved by a daring disregard of conventionalities, based on a knowledge of the relative inefficiency of French and Spanish gunnery.' He goes on to explain that the English fire was much more accurate than that of the Combined Fleet, and at least twice as rapid; and that this was a normal state of things may be easily shown by the losses in other actions, and especially those in Sir Richard Strachan's victory, on November 4th, over Admiral Dumanoir and the four ships which escaped from Trafalgar, as we shall see hereafter.

There remains one point only in the argument of the

Conqueror's officer upon which we have as yet said nothing. He considers that 'the victory would have been more speedily decided' by an attack in line abreast, and has no doubt that 'the body of the fleet sailed very equally, and could have been brought into action simultaneously with their leaders.' He admits as exceptions the *Britannia*, *Dreadnought*, and *Prince*. At first sight these remarks seem to contradict directly the opinion of Collingwood and Browne that the column was adopted to save time; but on a closer examination it will be seen that they refer only to the relative quickness of the two methods of attack from the moment when the formation was completed. Once placed in line abreast, the argument contends, the body of the fleet, with some three exceptions, could have kept station; certainly they would have attacked more simultaneously than they did, and not less quickly. But this has nothing to do with the question of preliminary loss of time in forming the orthodox line of battle, and bringing it into position opposite to that of the enemy. On this point the view of Nelson and Collingwood must be considered as final; and it is to Browne's credit, as a humble subordinate of both, that he is in agreement with them.

We are now in a position to attempt a conclusion of the whole matter. There are among the possible formations for attacking an Enemy's line two, known as the line ahead and line abreast, or line of bearing. About the abstract merits of these, from a purely tactical point of view, there can be no reasonable doubt—one is correct, the other highly dangerous,

especially with a light or uncertain wind. To adopt the latter as a rule for universal or even common practice would bring ruin upon any navy. But 'advantage ought to be taken of the individual circumstances'; and at Trafalgar Nelson judged that his end would be best attained by the more dangerous method. If he was justified in this he is beyond criticism, for the greater the risk he took, the greater the genius and resolution he displayed. Was he, then, justified? By the result, certainly; and the more closely and imaginatively his probable motives are inquired into, the more surely will that result be seen to be due to insight and calculation, rather than to good fortune. He knew that he had twenty-seven ships, when his enemy expected to see only twenty-one; he knew that that enemy was consciously inferior in gunnery and seamanship, and would be 'looking for the time when we should form something like a line'; he saw that they were keeping open a possible escape into port. Of his own men he knew that he could 'depend on their exertions,' especially if they were given a free hand to carry out his well-known intentions, and more especially still if they were led into action by their Admirals. If the sight of Collingwood going first into the smoke moved even Nelson to exclaim with admiration, there is little doubt that it made the blood dance in every heart on board the fleet, and none that Nelson counted on their enthusiasm. Finally, he knew that 'to arrange a couple of fleets, and fight a decisive battle according to the old system,' the day might easily not be long enough. He was determined to

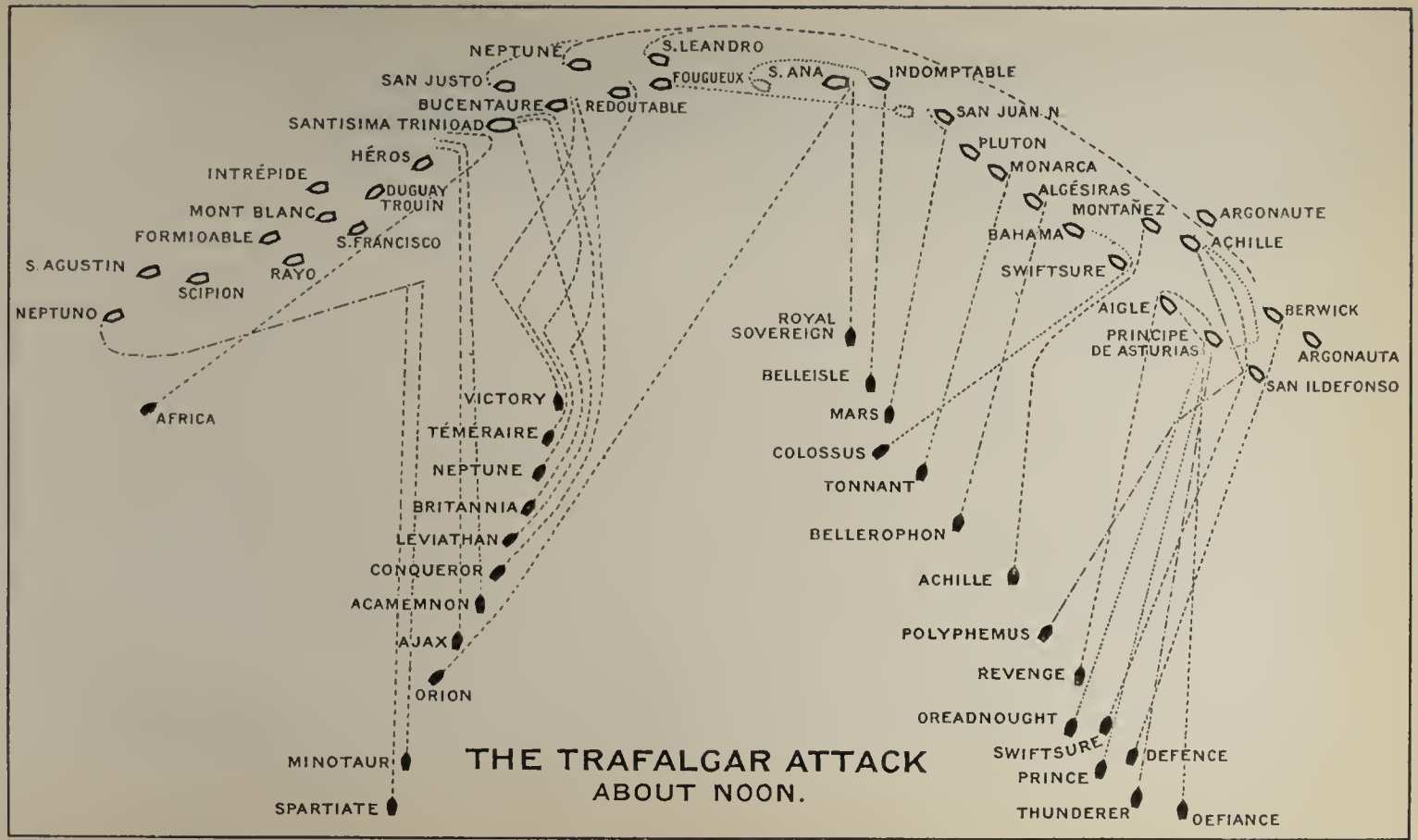
fight, and to fight decisively. His judgment was for the dangerous course. It was not the judgment of a doubtful or an adventurous spirit, but the quick, instinctive outcome of the most unwearied study and the widest practical knowledge of naval warfare. It is impossible to doubt that he was supremely right in his 'intelligent appreciation of the facts before him'; but it is equally necessary to remember that, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the same situation would have called for a method very different from the tactics of Trafalgar; tactics too dangerous to be thought of

> 'Till old Experience do attain
> To something like prophetic strain.'

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIGHTING AT TRAFALGAR

We have Sir Richard Keats's word for it that Nelson's object was 'to bring forward a pell-mell Battle,' and in this he certainly succeeded. The plan opposite this page is based upon the one already given from the *Naval Chronicle*, but the distance between the fleets has been altered to accord with the reckoning of the *Euryalus*, and the ships of the Reserve Squadron under Gravina have been moved up into the positions which they occupied when the English ships engaged them. The *Royal Sovereign* is one mile from the *Santa Ana*, whose stern she will pass in twenty-two minutes. The remainder of her column have been following at two cables' distance, or about a quarter of a mile, from each other; they are now sailing to the attack in accordance with Collingwood's order 'to form the larboard line of bearing, and to make more sail.' In three-quarters of an hour they will be, speaking roughly, 'alongside of the Enemy's rear ships.' The appearance of their formation as they pass along the dotted lines at very different rates of sailing will vary continually, and the positions of the enemy when once in action will be also constantly changing. Nelson's



THE TRAFALGAR ATTACK
ABOUT NOON.

To face p. 120.

column follow each other more closely, and do not form a line of bearing. The whole plan is, of course, only an approximation to the truth. The utmost claim that can be made for it is that it is compiled from the evidence given in this and the two preceding chapters, and suggests the most probable appearance of the fleets at the moment when the action commenced. It remains to describe the course of the two columns, and of each ship in them, during the five hours which followed; and this we shall do as far as possible by quoting from the logs, journals, and letters of the ships and their officers. The account thus obtained will be found to differ somewhat from that of James, who does not sufficiently indicate his authorities, who certainly made some mistakes in matters of detail, and whose timing of the action is particularly doubtful, owing to the fact that he based it upon the log of the *Spartiate*, and failed to note that, although that ship enjoyed an excellent view of the action, her watch was *admittedly* thirty-four minutes wrong. Admiral Sturges Jackson gives the place of honour to the log of the *Euryalus*, and we shall follow his example whenever it is necessary to take one ship's time against that given by another, more especially as the logs throughout agree better with the log of the *Euryalus* than with any other.

The battle has three fairly distinct parts: (1) The attack of Collingwood's fifteen ships on the nineteen of the Enemy's rear, of which he first enveloped the twelve towards the southern end of the line; (2) the attack by Nelson's twelve ships on the fourteen of the Enemy's van, of which he enveloped only the four rearmost

ships (one of these, the *Neptune*, went off down the line, but her place was taken by the *Fougueux* coming up); (3) the intended counter-attack of the Combined Van, which, however, was not persevered with, but was easily beaten off and merged in the general flight which was then beginning among the undisabled ships.

The first English gun was fired by the *Royal Sovereign*. It is generally stated that she had already received the Enemy's fire—according to the log of the *Euryalus* for two minutes, according to the *Phœbe* for five minutes, and according to the *Victory* for ten. Dr. Laurence Halloran, Chaplain of the *Britannia*, in his little volume of verse and prose, 'The Battle of Trafalgar' (1806), speaks of Collingwood as being 'fired upon in his advance by five or six ships at once.' But in a copy of the book which formerly belonged to Lady Collingwood, and is now in the possession of Admiral Sir Wilmot Fawkes, K.C.B., the following note on this passage appears in the margin in Lady Collingwood's handwriting: 'He was not fired upon by one; the *Royal Sovereign* fired first.' However this may be, there seems to be no doubt that the Enemy reserved their fire until the *Royal Sovereign* was considerably within gunshot, and did not cause her the losses in men and rigging which befell the *Victory* before closing.

At the moment when the firing began the Admirals on both sides hoisted their flags, and the entire British fleet the white ensign—the 'pale white ensign' so often spoken of by those who served under Nelson, for he would have no distinction between his own division and Collingwood's, though one was commanded by a Vice-

Admiral of the White and the other by a Vice-Admiral of the Blue. Every English ship also carried Union flags at her maintopmast stay and foretop-gallant stay. The French Commander-in-Chief alone showed no Flag, and it was left for Nelson to guess, as he did unerringly, the exact position of the Enemy's heart.

Five minutes according to the *Euryalus*, or ten according to the *Bellerophon*, after opening fire, the *Royal Sovereign* broke the line astern of the *Santa Ana* and ahead of the *Fougueux*—'about the twelfth from the rear,' says Collingwood. She was not far ahead of her next astern, but for a time, which probably seemed longer to her people than it really was, she was unsupported in close action. In passing under the stern of the *Santa Ana* she raked the Spanish three-decker with a double-shotted broadside, which is said to have put out of action fourteen guns and nearly 400 men. She fired her starboard broadside immediately afterwards at the *Fougueux*, but with much less effect. She then sheered up on the starboard quarter of the *Santa Ana*, and engaged her at the gun-muzzle, receiving at the same time the fire of the *Fougueux*, *San Leandro*, *San Justo*, and *Indomptable*, who were soon seen to be injuring each other by their cross-fire, their shot actually meeting in the air at times. They accordingly drew off, and left the two great three-deckers to fight it out. 'At 1.20 the *Santa Ana's* mizen-mast went'—exactly an hour from the first broadside. 'At 2.20 she crossed ahead of the *Royal Sovereign* (who was scarcely manageable), . . . having for ten minutes before ceased her fire; in going to leeward of us she broached to, and

her masts went by the board, and she surrendered.' Ten minutes later the '*Royal Sovereign's* mainmast went, and carried with it the mizen-mast. The ship perfectly unmanageable,' says Collingwood. 'At three ordered the *Euryalus* to take the *Royal Sovereign* in tow, and directed Captain Blackwood to go on board the *Santa Ana*, and bring the Spanish Admiral to me; he returned soon after with her Captain, who delivered to me the Spanish Admiral's sword, and informed me that Vice-Admiral De Alava was so dangerously wounded that he was near expiring. Sent the Spanish Captain back to assist and take care of his Admiral.' Alava eventually escaped, when the *Santa Ana* was retaken and carried into Cadiz in the gale of the 23rd. His nephew, Lieutenant Don Miguel Alava, was probably the only man present at both Trafalgar and Waterloo. He was on Wellington's staff, and earned five clasps in the Peninsula, as well as a K.C.B. in 1815. A portrait of him hangs in Apsley House.

The *Belleisle* came next into action, 'distance from the *Royal Sovereign* two cables' lengths,' or, according to her own figures, eight minutes after her leader. She 'cut their line astern of a French 80-gun ship (*Indomptable*), second to the Spanish Vice-Admiral, at the same time keeping up a heavy fire on both sides'—apparently at the *Fougueux* and *Santa Ana*, the latter of whom received from her a full broadside on the lee quarter. By this and by the *Royal Sovereign's* shot the Spaniard's starboard side was almost beaten in. The *Indomptable* now sheered off, but not before the *Belleisle's* 'mizen-mast went six feet above the deck.

The *San Juan Nepomuceno* now 'placed herself on our larboard quarter,' and the *Fougueux* 'ranged up on our starboard side.' Notwithstanding these odds and the fact that she had lost over fifty men before closing, the *Belleisle* made a stout fight of it. 'Kept up a heavy fire on them as we could get our guns to bear, the Ship being totally unmanageable, most of her rigging and sails being shot.' She beat off the *Fougueux*, but the French *Achille* came up; the *Aigle* relieved the *San Juan Nepomuceno*, and the *San Justo* and *San Leandro* raked the *Belleisle* in passing. Fifty minutes after the mizen-mast her mainmast went by the board; thirty-five minutes later the foremast and bowsprit followed, this final blow being the work of the French *Neptune*, which had 'placed herself across our starboard bow' a quarter of an hour before. The *Belleisle* was the only English ship totally dismasted in the action, and was now as near destruction as any ship in either fleet. She was almost unable to fire a gun, owing to the wreckage of her masts; but she nailed an ensign to the stump of her mizen-mast, and kept a Union-Jack waving at the end of a handspike. Three hours and twelve minutes after coming under fire she was relieved by the *Polyphemus*, and afterwards by the *Defiance* and *Swiftsure*, the crew of the last-named ship cheering the glorious hulk as they 'passed our stern and commenced firing into the enemy's ships on our larboard quarter.' The *Belleisle* accordingly 'ceased firing, and turned the hands up to clear the wreck. Sent a boat and took possession of a Spanish 80-gun ship, *Argonauta*.'

'The *Mars*,' says James, 'on her way down astern of the *Belleisle*, suffered severely from the heavy raking fire of the ships ahead of her, the *San Juan Nepomuceno*, *Pluton*, *Monarca*, and *Algésiras*.' She attempted to break the line between the first two, but was driven in front of the *San Juan* by the *Pluton*, who followed and engaged her. Having already had her rigging and sails greatly damaged, she nearly ran on board the *Santa Ana*, and was raked by the *Monarca* and *Algésiras*, but was relieved of them by the *Tonnant*. She was then engaged by the *Fougueux* (who was at the same time firing into the *Belleisle* on the other side), and raked by the *Pluton*. An hour and a quarter after going into action her log records that 'Captain Duff was killed, and the poop and quarter-deck almost left destitute, the carnage was so great.' Captain Duff was struck by a cannon-shot from the *Pluton*, which took off his head and killed two seamen behind him. After this the *Mars* must have passed to leeward up the line into Nelson's battle, but her log is silent until the entry, nearly three hours afterwards, that 'the French Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Villeneuve, with Captain of the Fleet and retinue, came on board from the *Bucentaure*, she having struck her colours.' They were received by Lieutenant William Hennah, who had succeeded to the command of the *Mars*.

The *Tonnant* passed under the stern of the *Algésiras*, raked her, and drove her off; then hauled up and engaged the *Monarca*, who soon struck. However, 'the French Admiral (Magon, in the *Algésiras*) came on the starboard quarter, and at the same time [*Tonnant*] was engaged

by two others'—the *Pluton* and *San Juan Nepomuceno*. 'Our fore and main topmasts gone.' An hour and a quarter after going into action 'Captain Tyler was wounded,' and the command devolved upon Lieutenant John Bedford. Forty minutes afterwards, the two ships, *Algésiras* and *Tonnant*, having been locked together by their rigging, and the former having lost her foremast, 'the French Ship struck to us; an Admiral's ship took command of her, we engaging the Enemy.' In the meantime, however, the *Monarca* had rehoisted her colours. There can be little doubt that she had surrendered, for not only did the *Tonnant's* people understand her to do so, but, as James points out, the log of the *Spartiate* (not yet in action herself) records that 'a Spanish two-decker struck to the *Tonnant*.' She gained nothing by her repentance, for she fell back into the arms of the *Bellerophon*. The *Algséiras* had 200 killed and wounded to the *Tonnant's* seventy-six, and among them was Rear-Admiral Magon himself, mortally wounded by a third shot, after refusing to quit the deck when twice struck.

The *Bellerophon* appears by her log to have got into action almost exactly at the same moment as the *Mars* and *Tonnant;* within twenty minutes after the *Royal Sovereign* opened fire she was 'engaging on both sides,' and five minutes later she 'fell on board the French ship *L'Aigle*,' whom she attacked with her forward starboard guns, while firing her larboard broadside at the *Monarca*, now rehoisting her colours. At the same time she was attacked by the *Montanez*, the French *Swiftsure*, and the *Bahama*. One of her officers adds that, 'whilst engaged

with five ships in this situation, *L'Aigle* twice attempted to board us, and hove several grenades into our lower deck, which burst and wounded several of our people most dreadfully. She likewise set fire to our fore-chains. Our fire was so hot that we soon drove them from the lower deck, after which our people took the quoins out and elevated their guns, so as to tear her decks and sides to pieces. When she got clear of us she did not return a single shot whilst we raked her; her starboard quarter was entirely beaten in, and, as we afterwards learnt, 400 men were *hors de combat*, so that she was an easy conquest for the *Defiance*, a fresh ship. . . . I must say I was astonished at the coolness and undaunted bravery displayed by our gallant and veteran crew, when surrounded by five Enemy's Ships, and for a length of time unassisted by any of ours.' But the famous '*Bully-ruffian*' suffered terribly. In less than thirty minutes she had lost her main and mizen topmasts; five minutes later the master (Edward Overton) fell, and six minutes after him the Captain. A midship-man and twenty-five of her crew were killed in the action, twenty-three died within a month after, besides 108 other wounded. Much of this loss was caused by the *Aigle's* hand-grenades exploding the loose powder near the guns. But the men were unbeatable. Lieutenant Cumby, who took command after Captain Cooke's death, wrote to his father that some of them wrote upon the guns in chalk 'Victory or Death.' Two hours and a half after going into action the *Bellerophon* 'took possession of the Spanish ship *Monarca*,' still no doubt regretting the *Aigle*, for, as the officer first above quoted

says: 'We were well matched, she being the best-manned ship in the Combined, and we in the British, Fleet.'

The *Colossus* and *Achille* came next. The *Achille* claims to have commenced action fifteen minutes, the *Colossus* twenty minutes, after the *Royal Sovereign*. James speaks of the *Achille* as being 'close astern of the *Colossus*, and sailing well.' Nicolas places them side by side in the column. Whatever may have been their earlier position, there is little doubt that by this time they had abandoned it, and were sailing in line of bearing, to the starboard of their leaders, and diverging from them. The *Achille* passed close astern of the *Montanez*, luffed up and drove her off, and then passed on to leeward to assist the *Belleisle*, who was drifting with three enemies upon her. On her way she attacked the *Argonaute*, whom she claims to have taken, but was herself fired into by the French *Achille*, passing to windward between her and her opponent. These ships having left her, she engaged in single combat with a fresh opponent, who struck in about an hour: 'Sent a Lieutenant and men on board the French ship, and took possession of her, which proved to be the *Berwick*, of seventy-four guns. Received French prisoners on board. Hove overboard sixty-seven butts to make room in the forehold for the prisoners.' These precautions were necessary from the condition of the prize, all three of whose masts were tottering, her hull 'dreadfully cut up,' her Captain and many officers killed, with more than fifty men, and nearly 200 wounded. The *Achille* had also inflicted severe damage upon the

Argonaute, who lost during the day nearly 400 killed and wounded, including the Captain.

The *Colossus*, twenty minutes after the *Royal Sovereign* commenced the action, was 'receiving a galling fire from the Enemy's rear. Began firing our starboard guns.' After ten minutes of this she 'passed our opponent in the enemy's line (the French *Swiftsure*), who bore up as we passed, to prevent being raked. Engaged on both sides. All view of the enemy on the starboard side obscured by the smoke, until we found ourselves alongside one of the French ships (the *Argonaute*), on whose upper decks, after the ships touched, there was not a man visible, but a fire from the guns, which in ten minutes was silenced, except a gun in the after part of her cabin.' The *Colossus* then brilliantly engaged the French *Swiftsure* and *Bahama*. The former 'at this time endeavoured to bear up under our stern, but we, wearing quicker, only received a few of her larboard guns before giving her our starboard broadside, which brought her mizen-mast down; and the *Orion* at this time giving her her first broadside, her mainmast also fell, and they made signs to us of submission. . . . Sent Lieutenant Huish to bring the two Captains on board, who returned with the Captain of the French ship *Swiftsure*, and second of the Spaniard *Bahama*, her first being slain.' The *Colossus* herself suffered very severely, losing her mizen-mast, and having 200 hundred killed and wounded—a loss one-third greater than that of any other English ship.

The two next ships were the *Dreadnought* and *Polyphemus*, but they were outsailed by the *Revenge*, who,

acting on Collingwood's signal to keep a line of bearing from him, got into action only ten minutes after the *Royal Sovereign*. She broke the line 'between the fifth and sixth ships from their rear,' passing in front of the *Aigle*, and giving her two raking broadsides while the spars of the two ships were entangled. Then, says Captain Moorsom, 'a Spanish three-deck ship with Admiral Gravina's flag (the *Principe de Asturias*) directly shot up on my lee quarter. The Frenchmen were under my stern, and I was obliged to endure a raking fire for a considerable time without being able to help myself. . . . From where I passed through to a little ahead of their centre the ships were nearly in a similar situation, all mingled together, and there the great impression was made. . . . My friend the Spanish Admiral, who had been trying hard to dismast me, and succeeded in carrying away all my topsail yards, at last bore up on the approach of one of our three-deck ships (*Dreadnought*) towards him. The ships in their flight as they came down, raked us on the bow.' The *Revenge* lost seventy-nine men, and had her bowsprit and all masts wounded, and three guns dismounted.

The *Dreadnought*, exactly an hour after the *Royal Sovereign* broke the line, 'commenced action with a Spanish three-decker (the *Principe*) and a seventy-four.' Thirty-five minutes after 'the *St. James* (probably the *San Juan Nepomuceno*), Spanish seventy-four, struck to the *Dreadnought*. Sent an officer and boat's crew to take possession of her.' She then again attacked the *Principe de Asturias*, who not long afterwards turned and went off home to Cadiz. The *Dreadnought* seems

to have followed her northwards for a considerable distance, but was probably outsailed.

The *Polyphemus* came into action between the *Dreadnought* and *Revenge*, then engaged with the *Principe de Asturias ;* but 'the *Dreadnought* hailed us and requested we would permit him to pass, as it was his wish to get alongside a Spanish three-decker (the *Principe*), which was a little on our starboard bow. Yawed to starboard a little, receiving a heavy fire from the three-decker and the two next ships astern of her ; altered our course and stood for the sternmost ship.' The English *Swiftsure*, however, got in the way, so the *Polyphemus* attacked the French *Achille*, and raked her stern severely, bringing down her mizen-mast and silencing her guns. Thinking she had struck (a Union Jack was seen waving from her cathead), the *Polyphemus* passed on to assist the *Defence*, then engaging the *San Ildefonso*, 'who, on seeing our manœuvres, hauled in her colours, which were hanging over her stern, and waved an English Jack from her traffle.' The *Polyphemus* then headed off the *Berwick* and *Argonaute*, which had struck, but were trying to join their flying fellows. Her loss was very small—two killed and four wounded. She was evidently—being only a sixty-four-gun ship—rather shouldered out by her companions.

The *Swiftsure* was the next ship in order of sailing, but her log gives no account whatever of the fighting. She seems to have joined the *Polyphemus* in attacking the French *Achille*, into whom she fired for forty minutes, but the prey fell eventually to the *Prince*. The *Swiftsure* had seventeen killed and wounded.

The *Defiance* got into action an hour and a quarter after the *Royal Sovereign*, ' (not before a great number of shot went over us and much of our running rigging shot away,) with a Spanish three-deck ship, the third from the Enemy's rear ' (*Principe de Asturias*). After about half an hour, however, the Spaniard hauled off, when the *Defiance* ' stood for a French two-deck ship (*L'Aigle*).' In another half hour ' ran alongside of her and made her fast. Boarded, and got possession of the quarter-deck and poop. Struck the French colours, and hoisted English. Her people still firing from the tops, forecastle, and lower deck.' This was inconclusive, so twenty-five minutes afterwards ' the boarders were ordered from *L'Aigle;* cast off the lashing and hauled off about pistol-shot distance and engaged her again.' In half an hour ' they called for quarter; ceased firing, out boats, sent a Lieutenant with twenty men to take possession of her.' So ended the *Aigle*, a strong and gallant flier worthy of her name. She had fought at least six ships up and down the rear line. Her hull was pierced in every direction, her starboard quarter beaten in, and 270 of her crew killed and wounded.

The *Thunderer* should come next, but she was out-sailed by the *Defence*. Both were very late in getting into action. It was about two hours after the *Royal Sovereign* had opened fire that the ' *Defence* began to engage a French two-deck ship (the *Berwick*).' In less than an hour ' she hauled off, at which time we engaged the *San Ildefonso*, who struck after an hour and ten minutes.' The *Berwick* passed on and fell to the English *Achille*, as already recorded. The *San Ilde-*

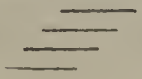
fonso, which had been already fired into by other English ships, suffered much damage and lost one-third of her crew.

The *Thunderer* opened fire about an hour after the *Royal Sovereign*, but it is not until another hour later that she records any close action. 'At ½ past (2) went to assist the *Revenge*, being engaged by the *Principe d'Asturias*.' The *Dreadnought* and the French *Neptune* also took a hand in this fight; it ended in the flight of the *Neptune*, and finally of the *Principe de Asturias*, who thus spoiled a more creditable day's work. She had engaged four or five English ships, and suffered a loss of forty-one officers and men killed and 107 wounded, including Admiral Gravina himself, who died after amputation of the left arm.

The *Prince* was the last ship of the lee division. She had bad luck from the beginning. When the Enemy were signalled she was engaged in supplying the *Britannia* with water and provisions. On the morning of the battle she split her foretopsail, and had scarcely replaced it when the Enemy were seen in line to leeward. She did not get into action till about three o'clock, but she made the most of her opportunities, and inflicted some loss, though she suffered none. 'Discharged two broadsides into a Spanish three-decker (the *Principe de Asturias*) that was engaged by the *Dreadnought* and a two-decked ship. Put the helm aport, and steered for down the rear of the enemy's line, engaging.'

She was indeed bent on engaging anything that still had life in it. 'Came alongside of a French two-decker.' This was the French *Achille*, most unfortunate of all

the brave, riddled by successive combats with the *Belleisle*, the English *Achille*, the *Swiftsure*, and the *Polyphemus*, her guns silenced, her foretop in flames. Her engine being shot to pieces, she could not extinguish the fire, and was accordingly preparing to cut away her foremast. Then came the hungry *Prince:* 'Gave her three broadsides, which cut away her masts and set her on fire. Wore round on our heel and brought to. Out boats to save the crew of the ship on fire. . . . Saved 140 men.' And now we must leave the *Achille* burning and go back to the weather division, to see how, while Collingwood was 'completing the business' of the rear, Nelson was taking care that his movements should be 'as little interrupted as is possible.'

It was at 12.21 by the log of the *Euryalus*, or one minute before Collingwood broke the line, 'that the van and centre of the enemy's line opened a heavy fire upon the *Victory* and the ships she was leading into action. At 12.23 Lord Nelson returned the enemy's fire in the centre and van in a determined, cool and steady manner.' The *Victory's* own log records that she 'opened our fire on the enemy's van in passing down their line.' This phrase, which is not found in Sir Harris Nicolas' version, evidently means that the *Victory* opened first with her larboard guns as she hauled to starboard after her feint of attacking the van. The result of this manœuvre, Sir Edward Codrington states in a letter printed in the first volume of his Life, was that the leading ships of the column made their final advance in echelon, thus  each on the

starboard quarter of her next ahead. This formation was rendered necessary, he says, by the fact that Nelson's ships were much closer together than Collingwood's. The feint towards the van had the effect of causing some of the enemy's centre ships to move forward in support; others fell back to leeward, with the result that, although the *Victory*'s log records her falling 'on board of the tenth and eleventh ships of the enemy's line,' there were altogether fourteen ships in that part of the Combined Fleet, separated by a wide gap from the nineteen in the rear. The battle thus resolved itself with curious distinctness—during its first period, at any rate—into two separate engagements. The space between, which James estimates at three-quarters of a mile, was crossed during the first stage of the action by only two of the Combined Fleet, the *Neptune* and the *Fougueux*, and by three English ships, the *Mars*, the *Orion*, and the *Dreadnought*.

When the *Victory* came within 500 yards of the French Commander-in-Chief in the *Bucentaure*, she began to suffer severely from the raking fire into which she was heading. Her mizen-topmast was shot away, her sails were riddled, her wheel broken, twenty of her crew killed and thirty wounded, a loss only equalled by eleven English ships during the whole day. Her counterstroke was long delayed, but it was a tremendous one. Sixteen minutes after opening fire she passed under the *Bucentaure*'s stern, and fired into her cabin windows first her forecastle carronade—a 68-pounder loaded with a round shot and a keg of 500 musket-balls—and then a double-shotted broad-

side. The smoke blew back into the *Victory's* port-holes in a suffocating cloud; black dust from the crumbled woodwork covered her quarter-deck. The gun crews listened with joy to the crashing of their shot from end to end of their enemy. Not even the *Santa Ana* had fared worse at Collingwood's hands, for by this one broadside the French Admiral afterwards acknowledged to have lost near 400 men and twenty guns dismounted. The *Bucentaure's* fighting was over, and the *Neptune* and *Conqueror* had an easy prey in her.

Behind the *Bucentaure* lay the French *Neptune*, who immediately raked the *Victory's* bows as she came hard round to starboard and ran on board of the *Redoutable*. 'I cannot help it,' Nelson had said to Hardy; 'it does not signify which we run on board of. Go on board which you please; take your choice.' Hardy, as it proved, could not have taken a more deadly choice. The *Redoutable*, seeing that the *Victory's* lower guns were active, while her upper ones were almost silent from loss among the crews, shut most of her lower deck ports, but kept her main deck guns firing, and rained langrage shot, musket-balls, and hand-grenades from her decks and tops. The two ships were firmly held together by an entanglement of their rigging, and both crews were anxious to board; but the Frenchmen were prevented by the *Victory's* starboard carronade and by a broadside from the *Téméraire*, which cut them down in a heap, and the English by the fire from the Enemy's tops, which inflicted still more fatal injuries. About an hour after the two ships grappled 'the Right

Honourable Lord Viscount Nelson, K.B., and Commander-in-Chief,' says the *Victory's* log, 'was wounded in the shoulder.'

Dr. Beatty, the remainder of whose narrative of 'The Death of Nelson' will be found later in a separate chapter, gives the following account of the scene on deck: The Admiral 'was walking the middle of the quarter-deck with Captain Hardy, and in the act of turning near the hatchway with his face towards the stern of the *Victory*, when the fatal ball was fired from the Enemy's mizen-top; which, from the situation of the two Ships (lying on board of each other) was brought just abaft, and rather below, the *Victory's* main-yard, and, of course, not more than fifteen yards distant from that part of the deck where his Lordship stood. The ball struck the epaulette on his left shoulder, and penetrated his chest. It passed through the spine, and lodged in the muscles of the back, towards the right side, and a little below the shoulder-blade. He fell with his face on the deck. Captain Hardy, who was on his right (the side furthest from the Enemy), and advanced some steps before his Lordship, on turning round, saw the Sergeant-Major (Secker) of Marines with two Seamen raising him from the deck, where he had fallen on the same spot on which, a little before, his Secretary had breathed his last, with whose blood his Lordship's clothes were much soiled. Captain Hardy expressed a hope that he was not severely wounded, to which the gallant Chief replied: "They have done for me at last, Hardy." "I hope not," answered Captain Hardy.

"Yes," replied his Lordship, "my backbone is shot through."

'Captain Hardy ordered the Seamen to carry the Admiral to the Cockpit; and now two incidents occurred strikingly characteristic of this great man, and strongly marking that energy and reflection which in his heroic mind rose superior even to the immediate consideration of his present awful condition. While the men were carrying him down the ladder from the middle deck, his Lordship observed that the tiller ropes were not yet replaced, and desired one of the Midshipmen stationed there to go upon the quarter-deck and remind Captain Hardy of that circumstance, and request that new ones should be immediately rove. Having delivered this order, he took his handkerchief from his pocket and covered his face with it, that he might be conveyed to the cockpit unnoticed by the crew.'

In the meantime the *Téméraire* had come to the assistance of her leader, whom she had followed into action 'within a ship's length.' When 'the *Victory* opened her fire, immediately put our helm aport to steer clear of the *Victory*, and opened our fire on the *Santísima Trinidad* and two ships ahead of her (*Neptune* and *Redoutable*), when the action became general. Some time after, the *Victory* falling on board her opponent, the *Téméraire* being closely engaged on both sides, the ship on the larboard side engaging the *Victory* (the *Redoutable*) fell alongside of us, the *Victory* on the larboard side [of her], the yard-arms locked; and immediately after struck, and was boarded by some of the officers and part of the crew of the *Téméraire*, at

the same time being engaged with one of the enemy on the starboard side (the *Fougueux*).' Shortly after 'the enemy's ship fell alongside of us, on which we immediately boarded her and struck her colours.' The unfortunate *Fougueux*, which had begun the day by firing first at the *Royal Sovereign*, had then, after engaging the *Belleisle*, crossed the space between the rear and centre, and advanced to within 100 yards of the *Téméraire*, with the intention of helping the *Redoutable*. The *Téméraire* gave her a full broadside at point-blank range, and immediately afterwards caught her fore-rigging and lashed it to her spare anchor. Then the *Redoutable's* 'main yard and all the wreck fell on the *Téméraire's* poop, which entirely encumbered the after part of the ship.' However, with a prize lashed to each side and the greater part of her batteries out of action, the *Fighting Téméraire* attacked a third antagonist, 'raking the enemy's first-rate (the *Santísima Trinidad*) for half-an-hour with some of the foremost guns.'

The losses of the *Victory* and *Téméraire* were heavy—132 and 123 men, all rigging cut to pieces, and all masts on both ships badly wounded. Moreover, the *Téméraire* had been so crushed between the two ships which she grappled that eight feet of her lower deck were stove in on the starboard side, and the whole of her quarter-galleries on both sides were carried away. But all this was nothing compared to the losses of the *Redoutable*, who had, according to the French official returns, out of a crew of 643, 300 killed and 222 wounded, including nearly the whole of her officers.

The *Neptune's* official log gives no details of her own fighting. Ten minutes after the *Victory* she 'commenced the action, and continued engaged with different ships until half-past four.' From another version, printed by Nicolas, we know that her first broadside was given to the *Bucentaure*, and that she then passed on to the *Santísima Trinidad*, whose main and mizen masts she shot away by the board in about an hour and a half. The Spaniard's foremast followed ten minutes later, and she then struck and waved the English Jack over her quarter. This was a good performance, for though not unassisted, the *Neptune* herself mounted only 98 guns against the great Spaniard's 130.

The *Britannia* also claims that she was only ten minutes after the *Victory* in beginning to 'engage three of the enemy's ships, having opened their fire upon us while running down.' Twenty minutes after (it was probably longer) 'observed the ship we were engaging on our larboard quarter (the *Santísima Trinidad*) totally dismasted, continued our course in order to break through the centre of the enemy's line, engaging on both sides in passing through their ships.' She finally passed through the line about three o'clock, and ended by engaging the flying van.

The *Leviathan* at one time was ordered, like the *Téméraire*, to go ahead of the *Victory;* but Nelson was already under fire before she got up, and she only reached a station close ahead of the *Conqueror*. She fired into the *Santísima Trinidad* just as the English *Neptune* shot away the latter's masts, and then passed on to the French *Neptune*. This ship, however, though

commanded by a man of high reputation, declined the combat in a manner which even her own countrymen have found it hard to explain. Unable, in spite of his efforts, to get up to windward, says the 'Monumens des Victoires et Conquêtes,' and masked by the *Redoutable*, Captain Maistral 'found it impossible to fire upon Nelson's column.' In order, therefore, to be useful where he could, he went off before the wind to attack Collingwood's ships, and partly retrieved himself by shooting away the foremast and bowsprit of the *Belleisle*, as already related. The *Neptune* was, however, one of the first ships in the final flight to Cadiz, and the only one in the Combined Fleet reported by Collingwood to have arrived there 'perfect.' To complete the puzzle, it was Maistral who led the rally and carried off two prizes on the twenty-third.

The *Conqueror* followed the *Leviathan*, but hauled up close past the stern of the dying *Bucentaure*, and settled down to give her the *coup de grâce*. In twenty-five minutes she brought down her main and mizen masts, and immediately after, while engaging the *Santísima* with her other broadside, she shot away her foremast. Before the half-hour was over the French Commander-in-Chief hauled down his flag, and the *Conqueror* reaped a glory which a greater than herself had sown. A party commanded by Captain James Atcherley of the Marines took immediate possession of the prize, and Captain Atcherley, after refusing to receive the proffered swords of the French Commander-in-Chief and his two Captains, brought the three officers off in his boat. The *Conqueror*, however, was for fight-

ing rather than for prisoners. She had in the meantime gone on in search of a fresh antagonist, and the French Admiral was accordingly taken on board the *Mars*, where he remained until the twenty-third, when he was transferred to the *Neptune*. He was, in truth, the prize neither of the *Mars* nor of the *Conqueror*, but of the *Victory*, who had crushed the *Bucentaure* as a lion crushes, with one blow in passing.

The *Ajax* gives but a very brief account of herself during the first part of the action. Forty minutes after the *Victory* commenced her fire on the enemy, she 'began to engage the enemy, firing from both sides as we broke through the line.' Her acting Captain then 'brought the ship to the wind on the larboard tack to leeward of the enemy's line, engaging them on their starboard side.' She formed part of the force available for defending the prizes and beating off the counter-attack of the van, as we shall see presently.

The *Agamemnon* was in much the same case. She opened fire an hour and ten minutes after the action commenced, and records that fifty minutes later she 'observed a Spanish four-decker (the *Santísima Trinidad*) which was engaged by the *Neptune*, *Conqueror*, and *Agamemnon*, lose her masts and strike her colours. Was prevented from boarding her by four ships of the enemy's line that kept up a heavy fire upon us.' These were probably the four nearest of the Combined Van, and the *Britannia*, *Ajax*, and *Orion* seem to have been similarly engaged at this time in staving off the counter-stroke ordered by Villeneuve before he surrendered. Half an hour afterwards the *Agamemnon* 'hailed a ship

which we had engaged and struck. Told her to hoist English colours. Engaging the Enemy's ships as most convenient.' It is difficult to identify the prize here claimed; it was probably shared with other ships. In this part of the battle there were not enough 'Birds' to go round.

The *Africa* holds a unique position. She was the smallest battleship on either side, being one of only three sixty-fours present; and she came into action independently, as shown on the plan. She had lost sight of the fleet in the night, and when day broke found herself some miles to the North. She headed accordingly for the leading ship of the nearest column—the *Victory*. Forty minutes before the action began Nelson signalled her to 'make all sail possible with safety to the masts,' which she was probably doing already. Eight minutes after the *Royal Sovereign* opened fire the *Africa* came within range of the enemy's van, for she took the straightest and shortest line towards the Admiral, though it meant running the gauntlet of ten ships, all bigger than herself. She proudly records that 'the *Africa* engaged the headmost ship of the Enemy's van . . . viz., a Spanish two-decker, bearing the flag of an Admiral [a mistake], and engaged the whole of the Enemy's van line as we passed them.' This did not satisfy Nelson; his plan was to isolate the van, not to attack it, and he wanted no salutes in passing, but grappling in earnest throughout. He signalled, accordingly, 'Engage more closely' with the *Africa's* pendant. She then 'bore down to the assistance of the *Neptune*, engaging the *Santisima Trinidad*, . . . commenced our

fire on her.' In twenty-eight minutes 'the whole of her masts went by the board, when she struck. Sent Lieutenant Smith with a party to take charge of her.' This delightfully impudent attempt of the smallest ship in the action to take possession of the largest was, however, unsuccessful. On reaching the Enemy's quarter-deck, Lieutenant Smith was informed by the Spanish officer who received him that she had not surrendered. The officer then pointed to the Combined Van, which was apparently coming down to the rescue, and bowed Lieutenant Smith back into his boat. The *Africa* then engaged the *Intrépide*, as we shall see immediately, with heavy loss, being overmatched by her seventy-four guns.

The *Orion* also played a singular part. She was far behind the *Victory*, and Codrington must early in the advance have made up his mind to avail himself fully of the Commander-in-Chief's permission to his Captains to 'adopt whatever they thought best.' Nelson's first seven ships were evidently more than a match for the four they were enveloping, and the Enemy's van was apparently out of action; the *Orion* therefore steered south for the rear division, and thus furnished the solitary example of an English ship belonging to one column but going into action with the other. Fifty-five minutes after she had seen the *Royal Sovereign* 'range up under the lee of the *Santa Ana*' she herself 'passed the *Santa Ana*, dismasted, and had struck. The *Royal Sovereign*, under her lee, with her foremast only standing.' Continuing her course down the line, the *Orion* next 'passed the *Mars*, *Colossus*, and *Tonnant*,

aboard and surrounded by several of the Enemy's ships, all dismasted or nearly so.' Finding the day's work already over there, she crossed the gap northward again, and 'passed the *Victory* and *Téméraire*, with one French two-decked ship (*Redoutable*) between, and on board of each of them, one French two-decked ship (*Fougueux*) on board the *Téméraire* on the starboard side also, and one other two-decked ship (*Neptune*) about a ship's length to windward of the *Victory*, all in hot action.' The *Orion* afterwards engaged the van successfully, as we shall see.

The *Minotaur* and *Spartiate*, the last two ships of Nelson's division, had not yet engaged when the French Commander-in-Chief, before surrendering, made the following signal: 'L'armée navale française, combattant au vent ou sous le vent, ordre au vaisseaux, qui, par leur position actuelle, ne combattent pas, d'en prendre une quelconque, qui les reporte le plus promptement possible au feu.' James states that this order to the Van to tack and come into action was in response to a signal from Dumanoir that he had no enemy to contend with. At any rate, it brought on the final stage of the action. It was about an hour and a half after the breaking of the line that the Combined Van began to come round with great difficulty. If they had begun the movement earlier, or could have performed it more quickly, they might have been of some service, for hard fighting was still going on. But it was not until 3.17, according to the *Phœbe* and *Ajax*, or 3.30, according to the *Euryalus* and *Orion*, that Hardy found it necessary to signal Nelson's division to come to the wind and fend off the threatened

counter-stroke, and Collingwood ordered the *Euryalus* to make the same signal to the *Minotaur*, *Spartiate*, and *Thunderer*. The van had then succeeded in tacking, but had split itself upon the long wedge formed by the *Conqueror*, *Neptune*, *Ajax*, *Agamemnon*, *Leviathan*, *Britannia*, and other ships lying north of the *Victory*. The *Héros*, *Intrépide*, *San Agustin*, *San Francisco de Asis*, and the three-decker *Rayo*, came to action almost at once—'bore down on us,' says the *Conqueror*, 'and commenced a heavy fire. Three of our ships coming to our assistance (probably *Ajax*, *Agamemnon*, and *Leviathan* or *Britannia*), the enemy passed our starboard quarter. Bore up to assist the *Leviathan*, who was in close action with a Spanish two-decker (*San Agustin*).' In a short time 'the enemy's mizen-mast went over the side . . . the *Leviathan* boarded her and took possession of her.' The *Héros* got off to Cadiz, with the loss of her Captain and all her topmasts; the *San Francisco de Asis* and *Rayo* also escaped for a time, but the one was wrecked and the other captured by the *Leviathan* two days afterwards without a struggle. The *Intrépide* was gallantly attacked by the little *Africa*, whose fire she almost silenced. But help came in time. The *Orion* 'opened fire on the stern of one of the enemy's ships endeavouring to make off from the ship opposed to her.' She was probably wrong in suspecting the Frenchman of intending flight. His own countrymen declare that by this day's work Captain Infernet gained a place among the French seamen of immortal renown, having engaged two, three, four, or even five enemies at once. Certainly his surrender was inevitable. The

Leviathan was giving him one of her broadsides, *Ajax* and *Agamemnon* were closing upon him, the *Africa* had been doing her best for three-quarters of an hour, and the *Orion* made short work. In less than a quarter of an hour she shot away all his masts, and sent Lieutenant Croft to take possession. The *Intrépide's* officers stated her loss at near 200 killed and wounded.

In the meantime the other five ships of the Combined Van got round with greater difficulty, the *Formidable* and one or two others being towed round by their own boats. They hauled to the wind and came right down the line, Admiral Dumanoir leading in the *Formidable*, followed by the *Scipion*, *Mont Blanc*, *Duguay-Trouin*, and the Spanish *Neptuno*. They fired first at the *Conqueror*, and one shot killed two of her officers, the First Lieutenant Lloyd and the Third Lieutenant St. George, the latter being in the act of congratulating his friend on his certain promotion. The *Victory* and *Téméraire* lay next in their path, for they kept out to windward to avoid the *Leviathan*, *Britannia*, and *Mars*, then engaging the five ships breaking to leeward. The *Royal Sovereign*, too, was exposed to their fire, for she was now in tow by the *Euryalus*, and was no longer separated from the ships of the other column by so wide an interval. Dumanoir fired on all these three ships, but he did less damage to them than to their prizes, the *Fougueux* and *Redoutable*. In the meantime the *Minotaur* and *Spartiate*, fresh ships, were closing on him, and, though he made his way through with his four French ships, his fifth, the Spanish *Neptuno*, was skilfully cut off. 'The *Minotaur* and *Spartiate*,' says the

log of the latter, 'commenced close action with these headmost ships, receiving and returning the fire of the five ships in passing with our topsails to the mast.' After about half an hour of this running fight, 'observed the sternmost, a Spanish, ship's rigging and sails very much cut up. Lay to on her quarter, with our fore and main topsails to the mast, all our after-sails set, firing obliquely through her, she returning at times from her stern-chase and quarter guns.' After another half-hour, 'wore, not being able to bring our guns to bear, to engage her on the other tack, the other four ships having left her.' Twelve minutes more, and she had her mizen-mast shot away; two hours after the *Spartiate's* first attack 'she struck, after having been very much disabled. She proved to be *El Neptuno*, eighty guns.' The two English seventy-fours who thus hunted in couples had been opponents at the Nile, where the *Minotaur* captured the *Spartiate*. At Trafalgar their losses were small and very nearly equal—twenty-five for one and twenty-three for the other.

The battle was now drawing to an end with the daylight. Dumanoir and his four ships were disappearing to the southward; a ragged string were making North for Cadiz, the *Héros* and *Rayo* from the van, followed by the French *Neptune*, the *San Leandro*, and the *Montanes* from the centre, the *Principe de Asturias* and the *Pluton* from the rear. Fifty ships lay intermingled and almost motionless upon the water. In the van the *Santísima Trinidad* was hoisting English colours; in the rear the French *Achille* was burning; in the centre Nelson lay

dying among the dead hopes of two great Powers. 'Oh, *Victory*, *Victory*, how you distract my poor brain!' he is said to have exclaimed when the wounded ship roared her last broadside at the flying van to windward. A few minutes afterwards he was gone, and the fighting ceased. 'Partial firing,' says the *Victory*'s log, 'continued until 4.30, when a victory having been reported to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Nelson, K.B., and Commander-in-Chief, he then died of his wound.'

The scene at this moment is described by those who saw it as unparalleled in beauty and significance. Such power the modern world had not seen; so stately an array of ships the world of the future can never see again. At half-past five the French *Achille*, which for an hour and a half had lit the sky with her funeral fires, burnt to her powder magazine and blew up. This, says Captain Harvey of the *Téméraire*, 'was the most extraordinary and magnificent sight which can be conceived.' Splendid, appalling, final: it was a fit end to the fighting at Trafalgar.

CHAPTER IX

THE DEATH OF NELSON

THE last scene in the tragedy of Nelson's life was worthy of the national character, and great beyond the power of any but a national genius to write of it. There is, perhaps, something of that genius present beneath the quaint, plain figure of Dr. Beatty, the Surgeon of the *Victory*, whose long decorous sentences set the vivid truth before us better than any but the highest art could do. The passage we are about to quote is, of course, practically the only and the incontestable evidence upon Nelson's dying moments, from the time when he was carried from the quarter-deck to the stifling air and dim lantern-light of the cockpit.

'Several wounded officers and about forty men were likewise carried to the Surgeon for assistance just at this time; and some others had breathed their last during their conveyance below. Among the latter were Lieutenant William Andrew Ram and Mr. Whipple, Captain's clerk. The Surgeon had just examined these two officers, and found that they were dead, when his attention was arrested by several of the wounded

calling to him, "Mr. Beatty, Lord Nelson is here; Mr. Beatty, the Admiral is wounded."

'The Surgeon now, on looking round, saw the handkerchief fall from his Lordship's face; when the stars on his coat, which also had been covered by it, appeared. Mr. Burke, the Purser, and the Surgeon, ran immediately to the assistance of his Lordship, and took him from the arms of the Seamen who had carried him below. In conveying him to one of the Midshipmen's berths, they stumbled, but recovered themselves without falling. Lord Nelson then inquired who were supporting him; and when the Surgeon informed him, his Lordship replied, "Ah, Mr. Beatty, you can do nothing for me. I have but a short time to live: my back is shot through."

'The Surgeon said "he hoped the wound was not so dangerous as his Lordship imagined, and that he might still survive long to enjoy his glorious victory."

'The Reverend Doctor Scott, who had been absent in another part of the cockpit administering lemonade to the wounded, now came instantly to his Lordship; and in his anguish of grief wrung his hands, and said: "Alas, Beatty, how prophetic you were!" alluding to the apprehensions expressed by the Surgeon for his Lordship's safety, previous to the battle.

'His Lordship was laid upon a bed, stripped of his clothes, and covered with a sheet. While this was effecting, he said to Dr. Scott, "Doctor, I told you so; Doctor, I am gone!" and after a short pause, he added in a low voice, "I have to leave Lady Hamilton and

my adopted daughter Horatia, as a legacy to my Country."

'The Surgeon then examined the wound, assuring his Lordship that he would not put him to much pain in endeavouring to discover the course of the ball; which he soon found had penetrated deep into the chest, and had probably lodged in the spine.

'This being explained to his Lordship, he replied "he was confident his back was shot through."

'The back was then examined externally, but without any injury being perceived; on which his Lordship was requested by the Surgeon to make him acquainted with all his sensations.

'He replied, that "he felt a gush of blood every minute within his breast: that he had no feeling in the lower part of his body: and that his breathing was difficult, and attended with very severe pain about that part of the spine where he was confident that the ball had struck; for," said he, "I felt it break my back."

'These symptoms, but more particularly the gush of blood which his Lordship complained of, together with the state of his pulse, indicated to the Surgeon the hopeless situation of the case; but till after the victory was ascertained and announced to his Lordship, the true nature of his wound was concealed by the Surgeon from all on board, except only Captain Hardy, Doctor Scott, Mr. Burke, and Messrs. Smith and Westemburg, the Assistant-Surgeons.

'The *Victory's* crew cheered whenever they observed an Enemy's Ship surrender. On one of these occasions, Lord Nelson anxiously inquired what was the

cause of it; when Lieutenant Pasco, who lay wounded at some distance from his Lordship, raised himself up, and told him that another Ship had struck: which appeared to give him much satisfaction.

'He now felt an ardent thirst; and frequently called for drink, and to be fanned with paper, making use of these words: "Fan, fan," and "Drink, drink." This he continued to repeat, when he wished for drink or the refreshment of cool air, till a very few minutes before he expired. Lemonade, and wine and water, were given to him occasionally.

'He evinced great solicitude for the event of the battle, and fears for the safety of his friend Captain Hardy. Doctor Scott and Mr. Burke used every argument they could suggest to relieve his anxiety. Mr. Burke told him "the Enemy were decisively defeated, and that he hoped his Lordship would still live to be himself the bearer of the joyful tidings to his Country."

'He replied, "It is nonsense, Mr. Burke, to suppose I can live: my sufferings are great, but they will all be soon over."

'Dr. Scott entreated his Lordship not to despair of living, and said "he trusted that Divine Providence would restore him once more to his dear Country and friends."

'"Ah, Doctor!" replied his Lordship, "it is all over; it is all over."

'Many messages were sent to Captain Hardy by the Surgeon, requesting his attendance on his Lordship, who became impatient to see him, and often exclaimed:

"Will no one bring Hardy to me? He must be killed: he is surely destroyed."

'The Captain's Aide-de-camp, Mr. Bulkeley, now came below, and stated that "circumstances respecting the Fleet required Captain Hardy's presence on deck, but that he would avail himself of the first favourable moment to visit his Lordship."

'On hearing him deliver this message to the Surgeon, his Lordship inquired who had brought it.

'Mr. Burke answered: "It is Mr. Bulkeley, my Lord.'

'"It is his voice," replied his Lordship; he then said to the young gentleman, "Remember me to your father."

'An hour and ten minutes however elapsed, from the time of his Lordship's being wounded, before Captain Hardy's first subsequent interview with him; the particulars of which are nearly as follow. They shook hands affectionately, and Lord Nelson said: "Well, Hardy, how goes the battle? How goes the day with us?"

'"Very well, my Lord," replied Captain Hardy; "we have got twelve or fourteen of the Enemy's Ships in our possession; but five of their van have tacked, and show an intention of bearing down upon the *Victory*. I have, therefore, called two or three of our fresh ships round us, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing."

'"I hope," said his Lordship, "none of *our* Ships have struck, Hardy?"

'"No, my Lord," replied Captain Hardy; "there is no fear of that."

'Lord Nelson then said: "I am a dead man, Hardy. I am going fast; it will be all over with me soon. Come nearer to me. Pray let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair, and all other things belonging to me."

'Mr. Burke was about to withdraw at the commencement of this conversation; but his Lordship, perceiving his intention, desired he would remain. Captain Hardy observed, that "he hoped Mr. Beatty could yet hold out some prospect of life."

'"Oh, no," answered his Lordship; "it is impossible. My back is shot through. Beatty will tell you so."

'Captain Hardy then returned on deck, and at parting shook hands again with his revered friend and Commander.

'His Lordship now requested the Surgeon, who had been previously absent a short time attending Mr. Rivers (a midshipman who lost a leg), to return to the wounded and give his assistance to such of them as he could be useful to; "for," said he, "you can do nothing for me."

'The Surgeon assured him that the Assistant-Surgeons were doing everything that could be effected for those unfortunate men; but on his Lordship's several times repeating his injunctions to that purpose, he left him, surrounded by Dr. Scott, Mr. Burke, and two of his Lordship's domestics.

'After the Surgeon had been absent a few minutes attending Lieutenants Peake and Reeves of the Marines, who were wounded, he was called by Doctor Scott to his Lordship, who said: "Ah, Mr. Beatty! I have sent for you to say, what I forgot to tell you before, that all power of motion and feeling below my breast are gone;

and *you*," continued he, "very well *know* I can live but a short time."

'The emphatic manner in which he pronounced these last words, left no doubt in the Surgeon's mind, that he adverted to the case of a man who had some months before received a mortal injury of the spine on board the *Victory*, and had laboured under similar privations of sense and muscular motion. The case had made a great impression on Lord Nelson; he was anxious to know the cause of such symptoms, which was accordingly explained to him; and he now appeared to apply the situation and fate of this man to himself.

'The Surgeon answered: "My Lord, you told me so before"; but he now examined the extremities, to ascertain the fact, when his Lordship said, "Ah, Beatty! I am too certain of it; Scott and Burke have tried it already. *You know* I am gone."

'The Surgeon replied: "My Lord, unhappily for our Country, nothing can be done for you"; and having made this declaration he was so much affected that he turned round and withdrew a few steps to conceal his emotions.

'His Lordship said: "I know it. I feel something rising in my breast," putting his hand on his left side, "which tells me I am gone."

'Drink was recommended liberally, and Doctor Scott and Mr. Burke fanned him with paper. He often exclaimed: "God be praised, I have done my duty"; and upon the Surgeon's inquiring whether his pain was still very great, he declared, "it continued so very severe, that he wished he was dead. Yet," said he in

a lower voice, "one would like to live a little longer, too"; and after a pause of a few minutes, he added in the same tone: "What would become of poor Lady Hamilton, if she knew my situation?"

'The Surgeon, finding it impossible to render his Lordship any further assistance, left him, to attend Lieutenant Bligh, Messrs. Smith and Westphal, Midshipmen, and some Seamen, recently wounded.

'Captain Hardy now came to the cockpit to see his Lordship a second time, which was after an interval of about fifty minutes from the conclusion of his first visit. Before he quitted the deck, he sent Lieutenant Hills to acquaint Admiral Collingwood with the lamentable circumstance of Lord Nelson's being wounded.

'Lord Nelson and Captain Hardy shook hands again; and while the Captain retained his Lordship's hand, he congratulated him, even in the arms of death, on his brilliant victory, "which," said he, "was complete; though he did not know how many of the Enemy were captured, as it was impossible to perceive every Ship distinctly. He was certain, however, of fourteen or fifteen having surrendered."

'His Lordship answered: "That is well, but I bargained for twenty"; and then emphatically exclaimed: "*Anchor*, Hardy, *anchor!*"

'To this the Captain replied: "I suppose, my Lord, Admiral Collingwood will now take upon himself the direction of affairs."

'"Not while I live, I hope, Hardy!" cried the dying Chief, and at that moment endeavoured ineffectually to raise himself from the bed. "No," added he; "do *you* anchor, Hardy."

'Captain Hardy then said: "Shall *we* make the signal, Sir?"

'"Yes," answered his Lordship, "for if I live, I'll anchor."

'The energetic manner in which he uttered these his last orders to Captain Hardy, accompanied with his efforts to raise himself, evinced his determination never to resign the Command while he retained the exercise of his transcendent faculties, and that he expected Captain Hardy still to carry into effect the suggestions of his exalted mind; a sense of his duty overcoming the pains of death.

'He then told Captain Hardy "he felt that in a few minutes he should be no more"; adding in a low tone: "don't throw me overboard, Hardy."

'The Captain answered: "Oh no, certainly not."

'"Then," replied his Lordship, "you know what to do; and," continued he, "take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy. Take care of poor Lady Hamilton. Kiss me, Hardy."

'The Captain now knelt down and kissed his cheek, when his Lordship said: "Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty."

'Captain Hardy stood for a minute or two in silent contemplation. He knelt down again, and kissed his Lordship's forehead.

'His Lordship said: "Who is that?"

'The Captain answered: "It is Hardy"; to which his Lordship replied: "God bless you, Hardy!"

'After this affecting scene Captain Hardy withdrew, and returned to the quarter-deck, having spent about

eight minutes in this his last interview with his dying friend.

'Lord Nelson now desired Mr. Chevalier, his Steward, to turn him upon his right side, which, being effected, his Lordship said: "I wish I had not left the deck, for I shall soon be gone."

'He afterwards became very low; his breathing was oppressed, and his voice faint. He said to Doctor Scott: "Doctor, I have *not* been a *great* sinner," and after a short pause, "*Remember*, that I leave Lady Hamilton and my Daughter Horatia as a legacy to my Country: and," added he, "never forget Horatia."

'His thirst now increased, and he called for "drink, drink," "fan, fan," and "rub, rub," addressing himself in the last case to Doctor Scott, who had been rubbing his Lordship's breast with his hand, from which he found some relief. These words he spoke in a very rapid manner, which rendered his articulation difficult: but he every now and then, with evident increase of pain, made a greater effort with his vocal powers, and pronounced distinctly these last words: "Thank God, I have done my duty"; and this great sentiment he continued to repeat so long as he was able to give it utterance.

'His Lordship became speechless in about fifteen minutes after Captain Hardy left him. Doctor Scott and Mr. Burke, who had all along sustained the bed under his shoulders (which raised him in nearly a semi-recumbent posture, the only one that was supportable to him), forebore to disturb him by speaking to him; and when he had remained speechless about five

minutes, his Lordship's Steward went to the Surgeon, who had been a short time occupied with the wounded in another part of the cockpit, and stated his apprehensions that his Lordship was dying.

'The Surgeon immediately repaired to him and found him on the verge of dissolution. He knelt down by his side and took up his hand, which was cold, and the pulse gone from the wrist. On the Surgeon's feeling his forehead, which was likewise cold, his Lordship opened his eyes, looked up, and shut them again.

'The Surgeon again left him and returned to the wounded who required his assistance, but was not absent five minutes before the Steward announced to him that "he believed his Lordship had expired."

'The Surgeon returned and found that the report was but too well founded; his Lordship had breathed his last, at thirty minutes past four o'clock, at which period Doctor Scott was in the act of rubbing his Lordship's breast, and Mr. Burke supporting the bed under his shoulders.

'From the time of his Lordship's being wounded till his death, a period of about two hours and forty-five minutes elapsed (or perhaps half an hour more); but a knowledge of the decisive victory which was gained he acquired of Captain Hardy within the first hour and a quarter of this period. A partial cannonade, however, was still maintained, in consequence of the Enemy's running Ships passing the British at different points; and the last distant guns which were fired at their Van Ships that were making off, were heard a minute or two before his Lordship expired.'

So ended a life of incomparable splendour and pathos, passing always from achievement to more dazzling achievement, and with nothing in all its labours, sins, miseries, and long triumphant service which is not intensely human and profoundly significant. No man ever went from birth to death with a more unsatisfied heart than Nelson, yet to his fellows he seemed to have touched the crown of happiness: *felix non tantum vitâ sed etiam opportunitate mortis.*

CHAPTER X

AFTER TRAFALGAR

SELDOM indeed after a great fight have the victors had so little immediate joy of their success. They had scarcely time to count their losses and grieve over Nelson's death before a great gale sprang up. Now that they had proved themselves invincible of men, Heaven itself seemed to fight against them. The Spaniards might well have mocked us with our old word of triumph—*Afflavit Deus et dissipati sunt;* but they were tongue-tied with admiration at the seamanship which kept the English Fleet in station off Cadiz throughout the storm, without the loss of a single ship. 'It more astonished the Spaniards,' wrote Collingwood, 'than the beating they got; and one of them said, when I assured him that none of our ships were lost, "How can we contend with such a people, on whom the utmost violence of the elements has no effect?"' But the strain was tremendous, and Collingwood, who must have regretted a thousand times that he did not carry out Nelson's direction to anchor, confesses that he was 'worn almost to a shadow.' There is something almost

grotesquely naïve about his lamentations. 'After such a Battle, such a glorious fight, having nineteen of their Ships in our possession, to be so completely dispersed by that unhappy gale, that for three days I had every reason to fear that not one of them would have remained to us, but many be driven into their own Port!' The loss of the prizes comes first, but the struggle was not one for trophies only, but for actual safety. 'The condition of some of our own Ships, too, was such, that it was very doubtful what would be their fate. Many a time would I have given the whole group of our captures to have ensured our own.' Then comes a consoling thought: 'But affairs were managed better for us. We saved four from the general wreck, and the loss of the Enemy is greater than it would have been without the gale; for of the Ships which came out to try their fortune a second time, two were wrecked, which made us amends for the *Santa Ana* and *Algésiras*, which were driven into Cadiz.' But the resignation is transparently half-hearted. 'Such a triumph as the whole would have been, coming into Port in England, might have made us proud and presumptuous; and we ought to be content with that good fortune which Providence has thought sufficient.' Happily these somewhat hollow arguments are followed by a downright and convincing sentence: 'I can only say that in my life I never saw such exertions as were made to save those Ships; and would rather fight another Battle, than pass such a week as followed it.'

It is difficult to detail with exactness the order of events during this trying week. One prize—the *Algésiras*

—appears to have been re-taken by her own crew and carried into Cadiz on the 22nd; on the 23rd Captain Maistral, of the French *Neptune*, got together four of the Line, and with these and six Frigates and Brigs he came out far enough to carry off the *Santa Ana* into Cadiz and to retake another Spanish Ship, the *Neptuno*. On the 24th, however, the balance was redressed by the British, who captured one Ship, the *Rayo*, and drove three others—the *Indomptable*, *Neptuno*, and *San Francisco de Asis*—ashore. On the 25th the gale increased, and the prizes were driven about in all directions. Three had been burnt on the 23rd and three sunk; the remaining thirteen were now almost all ashore. By the 28th four of these had been got off and secured; the remainder were destroyed by Collingwood's orders. The ultimate fate of the Combined Fleet was as follows: Of the eighteen French Ships one, the *Swiftsure*, was taken to Gibraltar; two were burnt—the *Achille* during the action, the *Intrépide* afterwards by the *Britannia;* the *Redoutable* sank while being towed by the *Swiftsure*, five of whose men, with thirteen of the *Téméraire's*, went down in her; five were wrecked—the *Berwick*, *Aigle*, *Bucentaure*, *Fougueux*, and *Indomptable*. Of these the *Bucentaure* carried down part, and the *Indomptable* the whole, of her crew; while in the *Fougueux* were lost thirty of the *Téméraire's* men, as well as all her own. Of the nine remaining unaccounted for, Admiral Dumanoir had led four away Southwards, to be captured a fortnight later by Sir Richard Strachan, and five had got into Cadiz—the *Neptune* and *Argonaute* comparatively uninjured, the *Héros* with only lower masts standing,

the *Algésiras* with none, and the *Pluton* in a sinking condition.

Of the fifteen Spanish ships, three were saved and sent to Gibraltar—the *Bahama*, the *San Ildefonso*, and the *San Juan Nepomuceno;* three were destroyed after the action—namely, the *San Agustin*, burnt by the *Leviathan;* the *Santísima Trinidad*, sunk by the *Prince* and *Neptune;* and the *Argonauta*, sunk by the *Ajax;* four—the *Monarca*, *San Francisco de Asis*, *Rayo*, and *Neptuno*—were wrecked; and five got into Cadiz. These were the *Santa Ana*, dismasted and captured, but retaken in the gale; the *Montanez;* the *San Justo*, with foremast only; and the *San Leandro* and *Principe de Asturias*, both totally dismasted.

In short, by the evening of November 4th, out of the thirty-three Ships opposed to Nelson at Trafalgar, twenty-three had been captured or destroyed, and ten were lying in Cadiz 'quite unfit for service.' Professor Laughton adds that not one of them ever put to sea again. To make sure that they should not attempt to do so, the harbour was blockaded by the *Prince* and five fresh ships from Gibraltar—the *Spencer*, *Tigre*, *Donegal*, *Queen*, and *Canopus*.

The first news of the Battle was brought to England by Lieutenant Lapenotière in the *Pickle* Schooner, which left the fleet on October 26th. He arrived on November 5th, and reached London at 1 a.m. on the morning of the 6th. Collingwood's despatches were sent on to Windsor, where they reached the King at 7 a.m. The Duke of York followed at eight o'clock to offer his congratulations and to condole on the death of

Lord Nelson. The whole of the Royal Family, who seem to have been deeply moved, then returned thanks for the victory in St. George's Chapel.

No imagination can reproduce the first shock of such unparalleled news. We can but measure it by its effect on Nelson's contemporaries. Lord Malmesbury has recorded the impression made upon the greatest English statesman of the time. 'On the receipt of the news,' he says, 'I happened to dine with Pitt, and it was naturally the engrossing subject of our conversation. I shall never forget the eloquent manner in which he described his conflicting feelings when roused in the night to read Collingwood's despatches. Pitt observed that he had been called up at various hours in his eventful life by the arrival of news of various hues, but that, whether good or bad, he could always lay his head on his pillow and sink into sound sleep again. On this occasion, however, the great event announced brought with it so much to weep over as well as to rejoice at, that he could not calm his thoughts, but at length got up, though it was three in the morning.'

The public, too, were genuinely moved. It was a time when London crowds were capable of much more violence and disorder on occasions of victory or rejoicing than are ever to be seen in these days, but for once the nation was sobered by a real sense of loss. Lord Malmesbury declares that 'not one individual who felt joy at this victory, so well-timed and so complete, but first had an instinctive feeling of sorrow. . . . I never saw so little public joy. The illumination

seemed dim, and as it were half clouded by the desire of expressing the mixture of contending feelings; every common person in the streets speaking first of their sorrow for him and then of the victory.' Lord Castlereagh evidently sent a similar account to his step-mother, Lady Londonderry, who was then in Ireland, for the letter which she wrote in reply contains the following passage, alluding to the feeling of the public, and adding a wise and spirited comment upon it:

'MOUNT STEWART.
'*November 13th*, 1805.

'I thank you a thousand times for your interesting letter: never was there indeed an event so mournfully and so triumphantly important to England as the battle of Trafalgar. The sentiment of lamenting the individual more than rejoicing in the victory, shows the humanity and affection of the people of England: but their good sense upon reflection will dwell only on the conquest, because no death, at a future moment, could have been more glorious. The public would never have sent him on another expedition; his health was not equal to another effort, and so might have yielded to the natural but less imposing effects of more worldly honours: whereas he now begins his immortal career, having nothing left to achieve upon earth, and bequeathing to the English fleet a legacy which they alone are able to improve. Had I been his wife, or his mother, I would rather have wept him dead, than seen him languish on a less splendid day. In such a death there is no sting, and in such a grave everlasting victory.'

The despatches received on November 6th from Collingwood were two in number: one describing the battle, the other adding details, two days later, of the gale and

destruction of the prizes. The originals of these and several subsequent despatches are now in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 34,813). The following is the text of the first one; the opening words of it might well echo in Pitt's sleepless brain:

'*To William Marsden, Esq., Admiralty.*

'*Euryalus*, *off* Cape Trafalgar,
'*October 22nd*, 1805.

'Sir,

'The ever-to-be-lamented death of Vice-Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, who, in the late conflict with the Enemy, fell in the hour of victory, leaves to me the duty of informing my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that on the 19th instant it was communicated to the Commander-in-Chief from the Ships watching the motions of the Enemy in Cadiz, that the Combined Fleet had put to sea. As they sailed with light winds westerly, his Lordship concluded their destination was the Mediterranean, and immediately made all sail for the Streights' entrance with the British Squadron, consisting of twenty-seven Ships, three of them sixty-fours, where his Lordship was informed by Captain Blackwood (whose vigilance in watching, and giving notice of the Enemy's movements, has been highly meritorious) that they had not yet passed the Streights.

'On Monday the 21st instant, at daylight, when Cape Trafalgar bore E. by S. about seven leagues, the Enemy was discovered about six or seven miles to the Eastward, the wind about West, and very light; the Commander-in-Chief immediately made the signal for the fleet to bear up in two columns, as they are formed in order of sailing; a mode of attack his Lordship had previously directed, to avoid the inconvenience and delay in forming a line of battle in the usual manner. The Enemy's line consisted of thirty-three Ships (of which eighteen were French and fifteen Spanish), commanded in chief by Admiral Villeneuve; the Spaniards

under the direction of Gravina; wore with their heads to the northward, and formed their line of battle with great closeness and correctness; but as the mode of attack was unusual, so the structure of their line was new;—it formed a crescent convexing to leeward—so that, in leading down to their centre, I had both their van and rear abaft the beam. Before the fire opened, every alternate Ship was about a cable's length to windward of her second ahead and astern, forming a kind of double line, and appeared, when on their beam, to leave a very little interval between them; and this without crowding their Ships. Admiral Villeneuve was in the *Bucentaure* in the centre, and the *Prince of Asturias* bore Gravina's flag in the rear; but the French and Spanish Ships were mixed without any apparent regard to order of National Squadron.

'As the mode of our attack had been previously determined on, and communicated to the Flag-Officers and Captains, few signals were necessary, and none were made except to direct close order as the lines bore down.

'The Commander-in-Chief in the *Victory* led the weather column; and the *Royal Sovereign*, which bore my flag, the lee.

'The Action began at twelve o'clock, by the leading Ships of the Columns breaking through the Enemy's line, the Commander-in-Chief about the tenth Ship from the Van, the Second in Command about the twelfth from the rear, leaving the van of the Enemy unoccupied; the succeeding Ships breaking through in all parts, astern of their leaders, and, engaging the Enemy at the muzzles of their guns, the conflict was severe. The Enemy's Ships were fought with a gallantry highly honourable to their officers, but the attack on them was irresistible; and it pleased the Almighty Disposer of all events to grant His Majesty's arms a complete and glorious victory. About 3.0 p.m., many of the Enemy's Ships having struck their colours, the line gave way; Admiral Gravina, with ten Ships, joining their Frigates to leeward, stood towards Cadiz.

The five headmost Ships in their van tacked, and standing to the Southward, to windward of the British line, were engaged, and the sternmost of them taken; the others went off, leaving to His Majesty's Squadron nineteen Ships of the line (of which two are first-rates, the *Santisima Trinidad* and the *Santa Ana*), with three Flag-Officers—viz., Admiral Villeneuve, the Commander-in-Chief; Don Ignatio Maria d'Alava, Vice-Admiral; and the Spanish Rear-Admiral, Don Baltazar Hidalgo Cisneros.

'After such a victory it may appear unnecessary to enter into encomiums on the particular part taken by the several Commanders; the conclusion says more on the subject than I have language to express; the spirit which animated all was the same: when all exert themselves zealously in their country's service, all deserve that their high merits should stand recorded; and never was high merit more conspicuous than in the battle I have described.

'The *Achille* (a French seventy-four), after having surrendered, by some mismanagement of the Frenchmen, took fire and blew up; two hundred of her men were saved by the Tenders.

'A circumstance occurred during the Action which so strongly marks the invincible spirit of British seamen that I cannot resist the pleasure I have in making it known to their Lordships: the *Téméraire* was boarded by accident, or design, by a French Ship on one side, and a Spaniard on the other: the contest was vigorous; but in the end the Combined ensigns were torn from the poop, and the British hoisted in their places.

'Such a Battle could not be fought without sustaining a great loss of men. I have not only to lament, in common with the British Navy and the British Nation, in the fall of the Commander-in-Chief, the loss of a Hero whose name will be immortal, and his memory ever dear to his Country; but my heart is rent with the most poignant grief for the death of a friend, to whom, by many years' intimacy and a perfect knowledge of the virtues of his mind, which inspired ideas

superior to the common race of men, I was bound by the strongest ties of affection ;—a grief to which even the glorious occasion in which he fell, does not bring the consolation which perhaps it ought : his Lordship received a musket ball in his left breast about the middle of the Action, and sent an Officer to me immediately with his last farewell, and soon after expired.

'I have also to lament the loss of those excellent Officers, Captains Duff of the *Mars* and Cooke of the *Bellerophon :* I have yet heard of none others.

'I fear the numbers that have fallen will be found very great when the returns come to me; but it having blown a gale of wind ever since the Action, I have not yet had it in my power to collect any reports from the Ships.

'The *Royal Sovereign* having lost her masts, except the tottering foremast, I called the *Euryalus* to me, while the Action continued, which Ship, lying within hail, made my signals, a service Captain Blackwood performed with great attention. After the Action I shifted my Flag to her, that I might more easily communicate my orders to, and collect the Ships, and towed the *Royal Sovereign* out to seaward. The whole fleet were now in a very perilous situation; many dismasted; all shattered; in thirteen fathoms water, off the Shoals of Trafalgar ; and when I made the signal to prepare to anchor, few of the Ships had an anchor to let go, their cables being shot; but the same good Providence which aided us through such a day preserved us in the night, by the wind shifting a few points, and drifting the ships off the land, except four of the captured dismasted Ships, which are now at anchor off Trafalgar, and I hope will ride safe until those gales are over.

'Having thus detailed the proceedings of the fleet on this occasion, I beg to congratulate their Lordships on a victory, which, I hope, will add a ray to the glory of His Majesty's crown, and be attended with public benefit to our country.

'I am, etc.,

'C. COLLINGWOOD.'

Great as this news was, it was not all. Collingwood's despatch was followed within four days by another from Sir Richard Strachan, who had finished Nelson's work on the 4th of November by capturing, in a brilliant action between equal forces, the whole of Dumanoir's runaway squadron. His account of the fight is not only marked by a chivalrous gaiety, but gives a glimpse of the moonlight chase at sea, which forms a worthy pendant to the majestic picture of the Trafalgar fleet. It is directed, as usual, to William Marsden, but is in form a copy of a letter already sent to Admiral Cornwallis. The original MS. will be found in the same volume with Collingwood's and other despatches in the British Museum.

'*To the Honble. Wm. Cornwallis, Admiral of the White and Commander-in-Chief, etc.*

'*Cæsar*, West of Rochfort, 264 miles,
'*4th Nov.*, 1805. Wind S.E.

'Sir,

'Being off Ferrol, working to the Westward, with the wind Westerly, on the evening of the 2nd, we observed a Frigate in the N.W. making signals, made all sail to join her before Night, and followed by the ships named in the margin (*Cæsar, Hero, Courageux, Namur, Bellona, Œolus, Santa Margarita*, far to leeward in the S.E.). We came up with her at 11 at Night, and at the moment she joined us we saw six large Ships near us. Captain Baker informed me he had been chased by the French Rochfort Squadron then close to leeward of us. We were delighted. I desired him to tell the Captains of the Ships of the Line astern to follow me, as I meant to engage them directly, and immediately bore away in the *Cæsar* for the purpose, making

all the signals I could, to indicate our movements to our Ships. The Moon enabled us to see the Enemy bear away in Line abreast closely form'd, but we lost sight of them when it set, and I was obliged to reduce our Sails, the *Hero*, *Courageux*, and *Œolus* being the only Ships we could see. We continued steering to the E.N.E. all Night, and in the morning observed the *Santa Margarita* near us. At nine we discovered the Enemy of Four Sail of the Line in the N.E. under all Sail. We had also everything set, and came up with them fast. In the Evening we observed three Sail astern, and the *Phœnix* spoke me at Night. I found that Active Officer Captain Baker had delivered my Orders, and I sent him on to assist the *Santa Margarita* in leading us up to the Enemy. At daylight we were near them, and the *Santa Margarita* had begun in a very gallant manner to fire upon their Rear, and was soon joined by the *Phœnix*. A little before Noon the French, finding an Action unavoidable, began to take in their small sails and form in a Line of Bearing on the Starboard Tack. We did the same, and I communicated my intentions by hailing to the Captains "that I should attack the Centre and Rear," and at Noon began the Battle. In a short time the Van Ship of the Enemy tack'd, which almost directly made the Action Close and General. The *Namur* joined soon after we tacked, which we did as soon as we could get the Ships round, and I directed her by Signal to engage the Van. At half-past three the Action ceased, the Enemy having fought to admiration, and did not surrender till their Ships were unmanageable. I have returned thanks to the Captains of the Ships of the Line and the Frigates, and they speak in high terms of approbation of their respective Officers and Ships' Companies. If anything could add to the good opinion I have already formed of the Officers and Crew of the *Cæsar*, it is their Gallant Conduct in this Day's Battle. The Enemy have suffered much, but our Ships not more than is to be expected on these Occasions. You may judge of my Surprize, Sir, when I found the Ships we

had taken were not the Rochfort Squadron, but from Cadiz.

'I have the honor to be, with sincere respect,
'Your very humble and Obedient Servant,
'RD. J. STRACHAN.'

	BRITISH LINE.	FRENCH LINE.
Starboard Tack.	*Cæsar.*	*Duguay-Trouin* (74), Captain Touffet.
	Hero.	*Formidable* (80), Rear-Admiral Dumanoir.
	Courageux.	*Mont Blanc* (74), Captain Villegrey.
		Scipion (74), Captain Barouger.

	SECOND LINE, when the *Namur* joined.		OUR FRIGATES.
Larboard Tack.	*Hero* (74), Honble. Captain Gardner.	*Duguay-Trouin.*[1]	*Santa Margarita.*
	Namur (74), Captain Halsted.	*Formidable.*[2]	*Œolus.*
			Phœnix.
	Cæsar (80), Captain Sir Rd. J. Strachan.	*Mont Blanc.*[2]	*Révolutionnaire.*[3]
	Courageux (74), Captain Lee.	*Scipion.*[1]	

[1] Totally dismasted. [2] Foremast standing.

[3] Joined at the time the *Namur* did, but with the rest of our Frigates, in consequence of the French tacking were to Leeward of the Enemy.

'I do not know what is become of the *Bellona*, or the other two Sail we saw on the Night of the 2nd instant.

'The reports of damage kill'd and wounded, have not been all received—the enemy have suffered much.'

In a subsequent despatch, dated '*Cæsar*, off Falmouth, 8th November, 1805,' Sir Richard Strachan gives the casualty return as 24 killed and 111 wounded in his own Squadron. His comment is: 'I daresay their Lordships will be surprized we have lost so few men. I can only account for it from the Enemy firing high and we closing suddenly.' In a postscript he adds:

'I have as yet no very correct account of the loss of the Enemy or of their Number of men. The *Mont Blanc* had 700—and 63 killed and 96 wounded, mostly dangerous; the *Scipion*, 111 kill'd and wounded. The French Admiral—Mons. Dumanoir le Pelly—wounded, Captain of the *Duguay-Trouin* kill'd and two Captains wounded.'

In 'closing suddenly' Strachan had an advantage denied to Nelson, and the losses in the Trafalgar fight proved, when the General Returns finally appeared in the London *Gazette* of November 27th and December 3rd, to be proportionately far heavier. In the following table the upper line of figures shows the killed, the lower line the wounded, on each ship.

WEATHER DIVISION.

Ship.	Officers.	Petty Officers.	Seamen.	Marines.	Killed and Wounded.	Total.
Victory	4	3	32	18	57	132
	4	3	59	9	75	
Téméraire	3	1	35	8	47	123
	3	2	59	12	76	
Neptune	0	0	10	0	10	44
	0	1	30	3	34	
Britannia	1	0	8	1	10	52
	1	1	33	7	42	
Leviathan	0	0	2	2	4	26
	0	1	17	4	22	
Conqueror	2	0	1	0	3	12
	2	0	7	0	9	
Agamemnon	0	0	2	0	2	9
	0	0	7	0	7	
Ajax	0	0	2	0	2	11
	0	0	9	0	9	
Orion	0	0	1	0	1	24
	0	2	17	4	23	
Minotaur	0	0	3	0	3	25
	1	1	17	3	22	
Spartiate	0	0	3	0	3	23
	1	2	16	1	20	
Africa	0	0	12	6	18	62
	2	5	30	7	44	

LEE DIVISION.

Ship.	Officers.	Petty Officers.	Seamen.	Marines.	Killed and Wounded.	Total.
Royal Sovereign	3	2	29	13	47	141
	3	5	70	16	94	
Belleisle	2	1	22	8	33	126
	3	3	68	19	93	
Mars	1	3	17	8	29	98
	4	5	44	16	69	
Tonnant	0	1	16	9	26	76
	2	2	30	16	50	
Bellerophon	2	1	20	4	27	150
	2	4	97	20	123	
Colossus	1	0	31	8	40	200
	5	9	115	31	160	
Achille	0	1	6	6	13	72
	4	4	37	14	59	
Dreadnought	0	0	6	1	7	33
	1	2	19	4	26	
Polyphemus	0	0	2	0	2	6
	0	0	4	0	4	
Revenge	0	2	18	8	28	79
	4	0	38	9	51	
Swiftsure	0	0	7	2	9	17
	0	1	6	1	8	
Defiance	2	1	8	6	17	70
	1	4	39	9	53	
Thunderer	0	0	2	2	4	16
	0	2	9	1	12	
Defence	0	0	4	3	7	36
	0	0	23	6	29	
Prince	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	
Grand total of killed and wounded						1,663

These figures, though official, appear to be inaccurate in several instances, but not to any important extent. The *Bellerophon's* log gives her killed and wounded as 128 and 27, or 155 in all, instead of 150, and of the wounded 23 died afterwards; the *Agamemnon* records the names of 10 instead of 9; the *Belleisle* gives 128 instead of 126; the *Africa*, in addition to the two

wounded officers named in the list, records that, on the 22nd, 'At 9, departed this life Francis Bender, midshipman, of his wounds received in the action. Committed his body to the deep.' Dr. Beatty also relates that on the *Victory* 27 additional men reported themselves to him after the returns had been drawn up. These were probably suffering from injuries not of a disabling kind, and had, like the boatswain William Wilmot, refused to leave their quarters while there was still work to be done.

The losses in the English Fleet bore, of course, no proportion to those suffered by the other side, whether in men or masts. The Combined Fleets disappeared from the seas. 'The Spaniards,' says Lieutenant Browne, 'calculated the loss of the combined squadrons—killed, wounded, and taken prisoners—at 14,000 men, 8,000 of whom they have supposed killed and lost after the battle.' It is not unlikely that both these figures, astonishing as they seem, were under the mark, for, besides the five ships deliberately destroyed on the 23rd after the removal of their crews, ten sank or were wrecked and destroyed in the gales, some with most of their company, some with all; and Collingwood writes to Mr. Blackett on November 2nd: 'Of men, their loss is many thousands, for I reckon, in the captured ships, we took twenty thousand prisoners, including the troops.'

The command of the sea remained with the British Admiral in no merely negative sense. Besides the six fresh ships who joined him from Gibraltar, eight of the victorious fleet remained out on duty—namely, the

Neptune, *Leviathan*, *Britannia*, *Ajax*, *Spartiate*, *Swiftsure*, *Prince*, and *Dreadnought*. Of these fourteen ships six were left off Cadiz, while Collingwood hoisted his flag in the *Queen* and went to blockade Carthagena. 'I am here,' he wrote on December 12 to Lord Radstock, 'with six Ships watching the Spanish Squadron, eight beauties. The *Real Carlos* and *Rayna Louisa* are Spanish perfections, like the *Santa Ana*, and she towered over the *Royal Sovereign* like a castle. No Ship fired a shot at her but ourselves, and you have no conception how completely she was ruined.'

But our last picture of the Trafalgar Fleet must be of the slow crippled voyage to Gibraltar and the funeral procession home to England. The ships which fared best in the gales were those which had anchored on their own responsibility; Collingwood records their names in his Journal, without comment: 'Bore up for the ships at anchor—viz., the *Defence*, *Leviathan*, *Donegal*, *Ajax*, *Orion*, *Melpomene*, and *Sirius*.' Many of the others were only saved by the assistance of their sounder companions. On the 26th the *Pickle* schooner left for England with despatches. The straggling voyage to Gibraltar had already begun on the 24th. The *Victory* was towed in by the *Polyphemus*, the *Royal Sovereign* by the *Mars*, the *Téméraire* by the *Sirius* and *Defiance*, the *Belleisle* by the *Naiad* frigate; the *Prince* towed the *Santísima Trinidad* till she was destroyed, and then took the *Tonnant*, who was finally assisted in by the *Spartiate*. The *Spartiate* herself had previously been towed off-shore by her twin, the *Minotaur*. The *Colossus* was towed by the *Agamemnon*, who was herself

'making three feet of water per hour'; the *Bellerophon* was assisted in going in by the *San Juan* prize. The *Conqueror*, *Orion*, *Africa*, *Achille*, *Revenge*, *Thunderer*, and *Defence* got in with less difficulty, though the *Africa*, who had been originally told off to tow the *Téméraire*, seems to have lost all her own masts in the gale, and finally came in under jurymasts.

The *Victory*, after refitting, joined Collingwood again on November the 5th, and then sailed for England, where she arrived on December 4th, with Nelson's body on board, preserved in a cask of spirits. She then sailed from Spithead to the Nore, where on December 23rd Commissioner Grey's yacht, the *Chatham*, received the body, now enclosed in a magnificently decorated coffin. With bells tolling, minute-guns firing, and colours half-mast high, it passed to Greenwich, for the Lying in State in the Painted Chamber, on the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th of January, 1806. On the 8th, in a violent south-west gale, the coffin was brought by river to the Admiralty in a long procession of State barges, attended by nine Admirals, five hundred Greenwich Pensioners, and the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London, and received at Whitehall Stairs by Norroy King of Arms, with nine heralds and pursuivants. On the 9th the funeral went in procession to St. Paul's, where it may be said that England herself was visibly present: her navy was represented by Nelson's oldest friend and Chief Mourner, Sir Peter Parker, followed by thirty Admirals and a hundred Captains; her dynasty by the Prince of Wales and all the Dukes of the Blood Royal. When the funeral

service had been said and sung, Sir Isaac Heard, Garter King of Arms, fulfilled his office in the traditional form: 'Thus it hath pleased Almighty God to take out of this transitory life unto His Divine mercy, *the most Noble Lord Horatio Nelson, Viscount and Baron Nelson of the Nile and of Burnham Thorpe in the County of Norfolk, Baron Nelson of the Nile and of Hilborough in the same County, Knight of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Vice-Admiral of the White Squadron of the Fleet, and Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the Mediterranean; also Duke of Bronte in Sicily, Knight Grand Cross of the Sicilian Order of St. Ferdinand and of Merit, Member of the Ottoman Order of the Crescent, Knight Grand Commander of the Order of St. Joachim.*' Then, as if conscious that this roll of words contained no adequate description of the dead, he added, in breach of all precedent: '*and the Hero who in the moment of Victory fell, covered with immortal glory!*'

THE POEMS OF TRAFALGAR

THE POEMS OF TRAFALGAR

No one need be surprised if it should appear upon examination that the greatest battle in our history has not produced the greatest poem in our language. The common belief that wars are the prolific seed of literature is a mistaken one. There are conspicuous instances of great wars preceding or accompanying wide outbursts of literary genius, but the relation between the two is not that of cause and effect; rather they have both sprung from the same stirring of the national character, which, like a soil new fertilized, throws up a quick and vigorous crop of various kinds. If war and literature chance to be two of these simultaneous growths, war will in all likelihood be found to choke and overshadow literature, rather than to feed or support it.

But has not war been from the beginning one of the chief subjects of poetry? Certainly, and it must be so to the end. The sword will always be among the first of the magical symbols that work upon the hearts of mortal men. War can never depart altogether from human life, of whose activities and tragedies it is the copy writ large, whether in noble or in hideous

characters. But it is not so clear that this war or that can be the immediate subject of great verse. To its own generation it is too near, too intertwined with glaring realities and confused with disturbing detail. The emotions of the fight, the sacrifice, the triumph, must be remembered in tranquillity—or at least in peace—if they are to be harmonized into anything deserving of the name and the immortality of music.

Whether these principles be universally true or not, they are strikingly exemplified by the poems of Trafalgar. A national war for life and death, a national outburst of the highest poetical genius, are to be seen side by side on the grandest scale as the eighteenth century passes into the nineteenth. It must be admitted that the one gave but little material to the other. The poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Byron cannot be justly described as warlike or patriotic. Poems of such a kind there are among the rest, but in number and importance they fall infinitely short of the proportion which the events and thoughts of war bore to the life of the time. Even Campbell, whose volume, published in 1809, contained 'Hohenlinden,' 'The Battle of the Baltic,' and 'Ye Mariners of England,' made nothing of a subject far more rich in emotion and in visible beauty than any of these; and Wordsworth, though he wrote an incomparable poem on Nelson's character, had not the dramatic power to handle the supreme tragedy of his life and death. It was not until 1904, a century after the battle, that a dramatic setting of this theme ap-

peared from the hand of an Englishman of genius; and even then Trafalgar was treated by Thomas Hardy from a professedly impersonal point of view, and as an episode in one part of a titanic spectacle. It is true, and most fortunate for us, that the subject here dominated the master of the show. The episode glowed back upon the hand that painted it, revealing lines of virile beauty and a rhythmic power which moves to such a sombre march as 'The Night of Trafalgar.'

From Wordsworth, then, from Scott, Rossetti, Hardy, and one or two others, we get the afterthought of a great nation upon a breathless moment in its life. But their poems are few, even among the few collected in this volume. The rest are chosen as examples, not so much of poetical excellence, as of the modes in which the emotion of a great crisis forced itself from the lips of our forefathers in the full rush of their triumph and sorrow. It is not every such crisis that has this power with Englishmen. Probably no other national event has ever produced so large and so direct a movement to expression in verse. Cultivated and uncultivated alike were swept instantly along by it. The best work of both classes is here; and if, on the one hand, it is interesting—to our generation curiously interesting — to find Cabinet Ministers striking the national lyre with genuine feeling, it is still more possible to enjoy the shuffling hornpipe tunes to which the same story is set in the common speech of the forecastle. Neither the Right Hon. J. W. Croker, M.P., nor the saucy Jack of the *Defence* are poets. Both

have spent their lives working in 'a lower field of human activity'; but both are Britons who saw Nelson's glory with their own eyes, and lamented at his death with all their generation. To hear the words which moved the men of 1805 cannot be a matter of complete indifference to their descendants.

Let us place these contemporary pieces in order of date, beginning with the hastily-written verses recited in the theatres immediately after the reception of the news of Trafalgar.

The two following extracts are taken from the *Naval Chronicle:*

'At Drury Lane, on the evening of the day on which the news arrived, after the performance of "The Siege of Belgrade," Mr. Braham, assisted by the other singers of the house, sang the national air of "Rule Britannia"; at the conclusion of which Mr. Wroughton, the acting manager, came forward and delivered the following impressive lines :—

'"Is there a man who this great triumph hears,
And with his transports does not mingle tears?
For whilst Britannia's Flag victorious flies,
Who can repress his grief when NELSON dies?
Stretch'd on his deck amidst surrounding fires,
There, Phœnix-like, the Gallant Chief expires.
Cover'd with trophies let his ashes rest—
His memory lives in every British Breast—
His dirge our groans—his monument our praise—
And whilst each tongue this grateful tribute pays,
His soul ascends to Heaven in Glory's brightest blaze!"

'A few evenings after, a new comedy was brought forward at Covent Garden, the epilogue to which was

delivered by Mrs. H. Johnston. . . . She appeared in a purple apron, with the word "Nelson" in gold, and the English Jack struck on one of the corners. It produced a strong effect on the audience; and their emotion was much increased by the extraordinary force and feeling with which Mrs. Johnston delivered the following impassioned lines, from the respectable pen of Mr. Fitzgerald:—

"'"Thus having finish'd all my flippant part,
I now must speak the dictates of my heart.
Each smile I wore conceal'd a half-check'd tear,
Which long'd to flow on NELSON's honour'd bier!
At that lov'd name each bosom heaves a sigh,
And drops of sorrow fall from ev'ry eye.
His mighty arm, at one tremendous blow,
Hurl'd Britain's thunder on his country's foe;
But in the midst of his resistless fire,
His conquering Fleet beheld their Chief expire!
Though England's ships in awful triumph ride
With shatter'd Navies captive by their side,
The tidings Fame with muffled trumpet brings,
And *Victory* mourns his loss, in sable wings!
Britons, she cries, though now my bosom bleeds,
Your Naval Sons shall emulate his deeds;
Thus shall his Spirit, rising from his grave,
Make future NELSONS triumph on the wave!"'

ULM AND TRAFALGAR

By the RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING, M.P. (1805)

While Austria's yielded armies, vainly brave,
Moved, in sad pomp, by Danube's blood-stained wave,
Aloft, where Ulm o'erlooks the circling flood,
'Midst captive Chiefs the insulting Victor stood,
With mock regret War's fatal chance deplored,
And shamed with taunts the triumphs of his sword.
Then, as the mounting fury fired his brain,
Blind with rash hope of fancied conquests vain,
In rage of hate and insolence of power,
(O luckless taunt! and most ill-chosen hour!),
O'er England's seas his new dominion plann'd,—
While the red bolt yet flamed in Nelson's hand!

That hand which erst, by Nile's affrighted tide,
Smote with dread fire the godless Warrior's pride,
And strew'd his blazing wrecks on Egypt's shore.—
Exhausted Europe, by the distant roar
Roused from her trance, her shatter'd force combined,
And half redeem'd the freedom of mankind.
But ah! too soon the imperfect efforts cease,
And fainting Nations sleep in deathlike peace;
Not long:—Once more to vex the troubled times,
Flush'd with the triumph of successful crimes,
With rapine's ravening eagles wide unfurl'd,
Behold! the fell Disturber of the World,
Scourge of the weak, and terror of the strong,
With unresisted legions pours along,
O'er trembling States to stretch his iron reign,
And wrest by force what fraud had failed to gain!

Earth all his own (so feigns his fabling pride!
Thrones of the North! be *yet* that boast belied!)

Earth all his own—in hope—he dares profane
With impious grasp the sceptre of the main :—
But England heard the vaunt, and NELSON made it vain.
NELSON once more (though taught by him we own,
The thanks, the triumph, due to Heaven alone)—
Once more the chosen instrument of good,
Fix'd on the waves, and stablish'd on the flood
His Country's rights :—but seal'd them with his blood.
O price, his conquering Country griev'd to pay !
O dear-bought glories of Trafalgar's day !

Lamented Hero ! when to Britain's shore
Exulting Fame those awful tidings bore,
Joy's bursting shout in whelming grief was drown'd,
And Victory's self unwilling audience found ;
On every brow the cloud of sadness hung,
The sounds of triumph died on every tongue !

Not joy thus doubtful, sadness thus sincere,
Shall grace, erewhile, the Tyrant-Conqueror's bier :—
Whether with undiscriminating sweep
The scythe of war, amid the mangled heap,
Shall lay him low ;—or lone, corroding care,—
Without one heart to pity or to share—
'Midst cheerless toils of solitary sway,
Shall waste his withering frame with slow decay ;
Come when it will from Heaven's all-righteous hand,
To save or to avenge each injured land,
Nations shall kneel to bless the welcome doom ;
And France, unfetter'd, trample on his tomb.

But thee, loved Chief ! what genuine griefs bemoan !
Fleets, Cities, Camps ; the Cottage, and the Throne !
Round thy throng'd hearse those mingling sorrows flow,
And seek faint solace in a pomp of woe !

Yet not the vows thy weeping Country pays,
Not that high meed, thy mourning Sovereign's praise;
Not that the Great, the Beauteous, and the Brave
Bend, in mute reverence, o'er thy closing grave;
That with such grief as bathes a kindred bier,
Collective nations mourn a death so dear;—
Not these alone shall soothe thy sainted Shade,—
And consecrate the spot where Thou art laid!
Not these alone. But, bursting through the gloom,
With radiant glory from thy trophied tomb,
The sacred splendour of thy deathless name
Shall grace and guard thy Country's martial fame.
Far seen, shall blaze the unextinguish'd ray,
A mighty beacon, lighting Glory's way!
With living lustre this proud Land adorn,
And shine and save through ages yet unborn!

By that pure fire, before that hallow'd tomb,
Heroes and chiefs in valour's opening bloom,
Frequent, in solemn pilgrimage shall stand,
And vow to prize, like Thee, their native land;
With pious ardour thy bright course pursue,
And bid thy blended virtues live anew:—
Thy skill to plan; thy enterprise to dare;
Thy might to strike; thy clemency to spare;
That zeal, in which no thought of Self had part,
But thy lov'd Country fill'd up all thy heart;
That conscious worth, from pride, from meanness free
And manners mild as guileless infancy;
The scorn of worldly wealth, the thirst of fame
Unquenchable; the blush of generous shame;
And bounty's genial flow, and friendship's holy flame!

And sure, if e'er the Spirits of the Blest
Still fondly cherish in the realms of rest

Their human passions, thine are still the same ;—
Thy zeal for England's safety and her fame !
And when in after times, with vain desire,
Her baffled foes in restless hate conspire
From her fair brow th' unfading wreath to tear,
Thy hand—and hands like thine—have planted there—
Thou, sacred Shade, in battle hovering near,
Shalt win bright Victory from her golden sphere
To float aloft, where England's ensign flies
With angel wings and palms from paradise !

Cease then the funeral strain !—Lament no more,
Whom, ripe for fate, 'twere impious to deplore !
He died the death of glory !—Cease to mourn,
And cries of grief to songs of triumph turn !
—Ah, no ! Awhile, ere reason's voice o'erpow'rs
The fond regret that weeps a loss like ours :
Though thine own gallant spirit, wise as brave,
Begg'd of kind Heav'n the illustrious end It gave ;
Though rival chiefs, while fondly they recall
Thy storied combats and thy glorious fall,
Count with just pride thy laurels as they bloom,
But envy less thy triumphs than thy tomb ;—
Yet, yet awhile the natural tear may flow,
Nor cold reflection chide the chastening woe ;
Awhile uncheck'd the tide of sorrow swell :—
Thou bravest, gentlest Spirit ! fare thee well !

SONGS OF TRAFALGAR

By the RIGHT HON. J. W. CROKER, M.P. (1805)

I

Though I do love my country's weal
As well as any soul that breathes;
Though more than filial pride I feel,
To see her crown'd with conqu'ring wreaths;

Yet from my heart do I deplore
Her recent triumphs on the main,
Those laurels dripping red with gore,
That victory bought with Nelson slain.

Oh! dearest conquest, heaviest loss,
That England's hope and heart have known
Since first, in fight, her blood-red cross
O'er the great deep triumphant shone.—

And she should wail that conquest dear,
And she that heavy loss should mourn;
Hallow with sighs her Hero's bier,
And gem with tears her Hero's urn.

Shame on the wild and callous rout
That lights for joy its countless fires,
That hails the day with mad'ning shout,
While He, who won the day, expires!

It was, indeed, a glorious day,—
And every homage of the heart
Were just, that rescued realms can pay,
Had Nelson lived to share his part.

Had Nelson lived to hear our praise,
I, too, had hymn'd the victor's song;
I, too, had lit the joyous blaze,
And wildly join'd the exulting throng.

But He is blind to pageant gay,
And he is deaf to joyous strain;
And I will raise no pleasant lay,
And swell no pomp for Nelson slain.

But I will commune with my mind,
To celebrate its darling Chief
What worthiest tribute it may find
Of soften'd pride, of temper'd grief.

Ye good and great, 'tis yours to raise
The storied vase, the column tall,
To every future age to praise
His life, and consecrate his fall:

Mine it will be, (oh! would my tongue
Were gifted with immortal verse!)
To strew, with many a sorrowing song,
Parnassian cypress o'er his hearse.

TRAFALGAR

1805

II

The fight was long;—and deep in blood
Britain's triumphant warriors stood:
High, o'er the wave, untorn, unstain'd,
The ensigns of her glory reign'd:
Around, the wreck'd and vanquish'd pride
Of hostile navies strew'd the tide;
Or scatter'd, as the tempest bore,
Their ruins on the affrighted shore.

The haughty hopes of France and Spain,
Had dream'd of conquest's laurel crown—
Oh! vision, arrogant and vain!—
Nelson has swept them from the main,
And dash'd their airy trophies down:

Their fancied wreaths his brow adorn,
Won by his valour, in his triumph worn.

But, hark! amidst the joyous shout,
For Spain's defeat, and France's rout:
But hark! amidst the glad acclaim
Of England's honour, NELSON's fame,
What deep and sullen sounds arise?
Are these, alas! victorious cries?
Boad they a widow'd nation's woe;
The triumph vain, and NELSON low?—
In his full glory's brightest blaze,
  On the high summit of his deeds,
While Victory's saintly halo plays,
With living fire,—immortal rays,—
  Around his head, the Hero bleeds;
In pomp of death, to mortal eyes
Never before revealed, the Hero dies.

He dies! but while on Egypt's strand
The Ptolomean tower shall stand;—
Stain'd with the turbid streams of Nile,
While seas shall beat Aboukir's isle;—
While the white ocean breaks and roars
On Trafalgar's immortal shores;—
While high St. Vincent's towery steep,
And, giant of the Atlantic deep,
Dark Teneriffe, like beacons, guide
  The wanderers of the western wave
Sublime shall stand, amid the tide
Of baffled Time,—his country's pride—
  The sacred memory of the brave;
And NELSON's emulated name
Shine the proud sea-mark to the ports of Fame!

TRAFALGAR

1805

III

'Twas at the close of that dark morn
On which our Hero, conquering, died,
That every seaman's heart was torn
By strife of sorrow and of pride ;—

Of pride, that one short day would show
Deeds of eternal splendour done,
Full twenty hostile ensigns low,
And twenty glorious victories won—

Of grief, of deepest, tenderest grief,
That He, on every sea and shore,
Their brave, beloved, unconquer'd Chief,
Should wave his victor-flag no more.

Sad was the eve of that dire day:
But sadder, direr was the night,
When human rage had ceased the fray,
And elements maintain'd the fight.

All shaken in the conflict past,
The navies fear'd the tempest loud—
The gale, that shook the groaning mast—
The wave, that climb'd the tatter'd shroud.

By passing gleams of sullen light,
The worn and weary seamen view'd
The hard-earn'd prizes of the fight
Sink, found'ring, in the midnight flood:

And oft, as drowning screams they heard,
And oft, as sank the ships around,
Some British vessel lost they fear'd,
And mourn'd some British brethren drown'd.

And oft they cried, (as memory roll'd
On Him, so late their hope and guide
But now a bloody corse and cold,)
'Was it for this that NELSON died?'

For three short days, and three long nights,
They wrestled with the tempest's force;
And sank the trophies of their fights,—
And thought upon that bloody corse!—

But when the fairer morn arose
Bright o'er the yet-tumultuous main,
They saw no wreck but that of foes,
No ruin but of France and Spain:

And victors now of winds and seas,
Beheld the British vessels brave,
Breasting the ocean at their ease,
Like sea-birds on their native wave:

And now they cried, (because they found
Old England's fleet in all its pride,
While Spain's and France's hopes were drown'd,)
'It was for this that NELSON died!'

He died, with many an hundred bold
And honest hearts as ever beat!—
But where's the British heart so cold
That would not die in such a feat?

Yes! by their memories! by all
The honours which their tomb surround!
Theirs was the noblest, happiest fall
Which ever mortal courage crown'd.

Then bear them to their glorious grave
With no weak tears, no woman's sighs;
Theirs was the deathbed of the brave,
And manly be their obsequies.

Haul not your colours from on high,
  Nor down the flags of victory lower :—
Give every streamer to the sky,
  Let all your conqu'ring cannon roar ;

That every kindling soul may learn
  How to resign its patriot breath ;
And from a grateful country, earn
  The triumphs of a trophied death.

TRAFALGAR

1805

IV

Rear high the monumental stone !—
To other days, as to his own,
Belong the Hero's deathless deeds,
Who greatly lives, who bravely bleeds.

Not to a petty point of time
Or space, but wide to every clime
And age, his glorious fall bequeaths
Valour's sword, and victory's wreaths.

The rude but pious care of yore
Heap'd o'er the brave the mounded shore ;
And still that mounded shore can tell
Where Hector and Achilles fell.

There, over glory's earthly bed,
When many a wasting age had fled,
The world's Great Victor pour'd his pray'rs
For fame, and monuments like theirs.

Happy the brave! whose sacred tomb
Itself averts the oblivious doom,
Bears on its breast unfading bays,
And gives eternity of praise!

High, then, the monumental pile
Erect, for NELSON of the NILE!
Of TRAFALGAR, and VINCENT'S heights,
For NELSON of the hundred fights—

For Him, alike on shore and surge,
Of proud Iberia's power the scourge;
And half around the sea-girt ball,
The hunter of the recreant Gaul.

Rear the tall shaft on some bold steep,
Whose base is buried in the deep;
But whose bright summit shines afar
O'er the blue ocean, like a star.

Such let it be, as o'er the bed
Of Nilus rears its lowly head;
That never shook at mortal might,
Till NELSON lanced the bolts of fight.

(What time the Orient, wrapt in fire,
Blazed, its own seamen's funeral pyre,
And, with explosive fury riven,
Sprang thundering to the midnight heaven.)

Around it, when the raven night
Shades ocean, fire the beacon-light;
And let it, thro' the tempest, flame
The star of safety as of fame.

Thither, as o'er the deep below
The seaman seeks his country's foe,
His emulative eye shall roll,
And NELSON'S spirit fill his soul.

Thither shall youthful heroes climb,
The NELSONS of an after-time,
And round that sacred altar swear
Such glory and such graves to share.

Raise then, imperial Britain, raise
The trophied pillar of his praise;
And worthy be its towering pride,
Of those that live, of HIM that died!

Worthy of NELSON of the NILE!
Of NELSON of the cloud-capped Isle,
Of TRAFALGAR and VINCENT'S heights,
Of NELSON of the hundred fights!

AUTHOR'S NOTE.—Line 49, *Thither shall youthful heroes climb*. This and some other passages (in these Songs of Trafalgar) so much resemble some thoughts in the vigorous and beautiful verses entitled 'Ulm and Trafalgar,' that it is necessary for me to say that the former were written and published in Ireland in 1805, and that it was not until a very considerable time after, that I had the pleasure of reading the latter, which were printed in London early, I believe, in 1806. I should also add that I think it highly improbable that my little publication could have reached the author of 'Ulm and Trafalgar' before his poem appeared, so that whatever coincidence there may be is purely accidental.

EPITAPH

WRITTEN IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AT THE FUNERAL OF NELSON

By R. BLAND

England, Thy Sons beneath this solemn Dome
In mournful triumph pil'd their Nelson's Tomb;
Groans from assembled thousands here arose,
And a whole Nation hymn'd him to repose:
Fall'n on those times when torn by rapine's lust
Pale Europe wept her honors in the dust.
First of the brave He mingled in the strife,
And for his Country's Freedom gave his Life.
Not this his Monument—the Seas that roll
From Nile's hot region to the Northern Pole,
The dread of Foes that crouch'd beneath his power,
The tears of Friends that grac'd his dying hour,
Navies that fled the terrors of his Name,
And Nations sav'd the Glorious Chief proclaim!
Here first the musing Briton shall aspire
To patriot deeds, and emulate his fire;
The Storm of Seas and Battles wish to brave,
And catch a kindred Virtue from his Grave.

From

TRAFALGAR; OR, NELSON'S LAST TRIUMPH

By THE HON. MARTIN BLADEN HAWKE (1805?)

Deep had we mourn'd Destruction's powerful sway,
That urg'd o'er Austria's plains her fatal way.
Where the dark Danube rolls his rapid wave,
Full many a warrior found an early grave,
And Europe's fate appear'd already o'er,
When Vict'ry gleam'd on fam'd Trafalgar's shore.
Since Mantinea's fatal day was won
By Theban prowess and Polymnio's son,
Ne'er has the ocean, or the carnag'd plain,
View'd such a combat—such a Hero slain!
Tho' the keen bayonets' compulsive pow'rs
Force trembling conscripts from Liguria's bow'rs,
Still France shall mourn, on many a distant day,
The dread destruction of Trafalgar's Bay.
Trafalgar—cherish'd—but lamented name,
Our future heroes shall record thy fame;
Oft point to Cadiz' tow'rs with anxious care,
And tell how Nelson bled in triumph there.
Oh, had we sav'd that Godlike conqu'ring arm,
That cast o'er Britain's realm a potent charm!
Oh, had we hail'd the Hero's blest return,
How would each breast with patriot feeling burn!
What madd'ning shouts the Victor's ear wou'd greet!
Then had we own'd the triumph as complete,
Then smiles of joy had chas'd the pangs of woe,
Nor the world mourn'd the gallant Chief laid low.
Yet wherefore mourn? since Death's relentless fate
Still sweeps away the lowly and the great.

Wherever Life in varied form appears,
Stern Death commands the tribute of our years.
Where fell Contagion spreads the fever's fire
Thousands inglorious on their couch expire.
And Want and Pain, in many a varied form
'Ride on the whirlwind and direct the Storm.'
NELSON, not such *thy* fate—'twas thine to prove
A nation's gratitude, a nation's love!
When living, follow'd thro' the busy street,
What cheering sounds thy gallant ear wou'd greet!
While palsied age and eager youth wou'd smile,
And hail the Hero from the banks of Nile;
Follow his steps to take a long adieu,
And bid him still that glorious path pursue.
Glorious indeed!—in Honor's lap he fell,
And conqu'ring cannon toll'd the Victor's knell!
See o'er the wave of Thames's silver tide,
In solemn pomp, the crowded vessels glide,
While from each tow'r the deep and muffled peal
Speaks of the woes which British bosoms feel.
The wounded vet'ran views the passing bier,
Nor turns aside to hide the honest tear.
Soon in dull pomp to proud Augusta's dome,
(Of many a hero long the honour'd tomb)
The slow procession moves in dread array,
And lurid torches light the destin'd way;
While eager throngs survey the sad parade,
They mourn the Hero, and revere his Shade:
Nor needs the trophied fane, or sculptur'd bust
To mark the sacred relics of his dust:
Deep in each British heart his worth's engrav'd,
Mourn'd by he gen'rous realm his valour sav'd.

From

VICTORY IN TEARS; OR, THE SHADE OF NELSON

(Dedicated to Earl Spencer, and published by John Murray, 1805)

'Twas thus the Muse, as powerful feelings press'd,
Obey'd the impulse of her labouring breast;
When lo! before her eye in light array'd
A vision rose—'twas valiant Nelson's shade.
Warm as in life the awful warrior seem'd,
And round his brow a wreath of glory beam'd;
Illustrious scars his honours here express'd,
And Death's last wound shone starlike on his breast;
Bright as in battle flash'd his fearless eye,
And as he spoke, Heaven echoed from on high.
'Forbear!' he cried, 'forbear the mournful lay,
Nor steep in tears the trophies of the day;
To strains of rapture wake the wond'rous lyre!
Let sounds of joy Britannia's breast inspire!

* * * * *

Tell her, though Nelson's pennant flies no more,
She has a thousand Nelsons yet in store;
Each prompt alike to thwart a tyrant's will,
And guard ships, colonies, and commerce still.

* * * * *

Tell her, as Time's advancing wings unfold,
A race of brave St. Vincents I behold;
New Duncans—Howes, a radiant host appear,
And palms spring forth in every future year;
Safe in her strength, and steady in her reign,
Successive heroes shall her sway sustain,
The foe through every shape of war pursue,
Dauntless alike by sea and land subdue,

Breathe her bold spirit forth in every wind,
And wave the flag of Freedom o'er mankind.'

* * * * *

Thus spoke the patriot shade, and rising bright
The awful vision vanish'd from the sight.
Immortal chief! beyond the power of Fate,
Renown'd on earth to Time's remotest date!
Pure flame of valour! spar'd awhile from heav'n!
Sword! to thy country's strength a moment given
For Freedom's hand to wield in wrath below,
And wreak full vengeance on the tyrant foe!
Bright as the bolt that from the angry skies
Through sulph'rous clouds in awful fury flies
To strike some tow'ring structure to the ground,
And vanish 'midst the smoking ruins round,
The Hero fell—a fierce electric fire!
Shot from the kindling eye of Britain's ire,
He struck with dreadful wrath the floating towers,
Proud boast of Gallia's and Iberia's powers!
In thunder clad once more his mortal form,
And vanish'd 'midst the terrors of the storm.

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

(Wordsworth drew this ideal sketch in 1806, mainly from the life and character of Nelson, and the latter half of it especially from the history of Trafalgar)

WHO is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn:
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his first care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still

To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
—He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To home-felt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—

'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
That every man in arms should wish to be.

LINES

From the Introduction to Canto I. of Scott's 'Marmion' (1808)

To mute and to material things,
New life revolving summer brings;
The genial call dead Nature hears,
And in her glory reappears.
But oh! my country's wintry state
What second spring shall renovate?
What powerful call shall bid arise
The buried warlike, and the wise;
The mind, that thought for Britain's weal,
The hand that grasped the victor steel?
The vernal sun new life bestows
Even on the meanest flower that blows;
But vainly, vainly, may he shine
Where glory weeps o'er NELSON'S shrine;
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
That shrouds, O PITT, thy hallowed tomb!

Deep graved in every British heart,
O never let those names depart!
Say to your sons—Lo, here his grave,
Who victor died on Gadite wave;
To him as to the burning levin,
Short, bright, resistless course was given;
Where'er his country's foe were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
Rolled, blazed, destroyed—and was no more.

THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

From a 'Garland,' published by C. Randall, of Stirling)

Arise, ye Sons of Britain, in chorus join and sing,
Great and joyful news is come unto our Royal King.
An engagement we have had by sea
With France and Spain, our enemy,
And we've gained a glorious victory
Again, my brave boys.

On the twenty-first of October, at the rising of the sun,
We form'd the line for action, every man to his gun.
Brave Nelson to his men did say
The Lord will prosper us this day,
Give them a broadside, fire away,
My true British boys.

Broadside after broadside, our Canon balls did fly,
The small shot, like hailstones, upon the deck did lie.
Their masts and rigging we shot away
Besides some thousands on that day
Were killed and wounded in the fray
On both sides, brave boys.

Lord reward brave Nelson, and protect his soul,
Nineteen sail the combin'd fleets lost in the whole;
The *Achille* blew up amidst them all,
Which made the French for mercy call;—
Nelson was slain by a musket-ball,
Mourn, Britons, mourn.

Each brave commander in tears did shake his head,
Their grief was no relief when Nelson he was dead;

It was by a fatal musket-ball,
Which caus'd our Hero for to fall,
He cried fight on, God bless you all,
My brave British Tars.

Huzza, my valiant Seamen, huzza, we've gained the day,
But lost a brave Commander, bleeding on the lay,
With joy we'd gain'd the victory,
Before his death, he did plainly see,
I die in peace, bless God, said he,
The victory is won.

I hope this glorious victory will bring a speedy peace,
That all trade in England may flourish and increase
And our ships from port to port go free
As before, let us with them agree,
May this turn the heart of our Enemy.
Huzza, my brave boys.

THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

(From a 'Garland,' published by J. and M. Robertson, of Glasgow, 1807)

Come, all you bold Britons, attend with a cheer
To these lines I have penn'd I pray lend an ear;
The eighteenth of October, early in the day,
The combin'd fleets from Cadiz boldly put to sea.

The *Euryalus* made signal, the *Defence* did repeat,
And the *Mars* and *Colossus* convey'd to our fleet;
It was off St. Mary's, nine leagues from the shore,
When the signal they saw, down for Cadiz they bore.

On Sunday the twentieth, so early in the morn,
We espied our enemies four leagues astern.
Our ships we wore immediately, like lions bold and free,
The day being foggy, we lost sight of our enemy.

But on Monday the twenty-first, eighteen hundred and five,
The combined lubbers thought to eat us up alive;
But ere the day closed, in the Temple of Fame,
Emblazon'd with glory was our Admiral's name.

Of line of battle ships they had just thirty-three,
Which was of the line just six sail more than we,
We had but twenty-seven, and bold Nelson did say,
Haste, Britons, to glory, and I'll lead the way.

Royal Sovereign was the first broke the line of the foe,
The *Victory*, *Belleisle*, and the *Téméraire* also;
Up came the *Tonnant* with a thundering noise,
And well play'd her part with her brave British boys.

The *Minotaur* thunder'd on, and the *Conqueror* also
The *Mars* and *Colossus* struck a decisive blow
The *Achille*, the *Ajax*, the *Africa* likewise,
The *Neptune* and *Britannia* soon opened their eyes.

The *Revenge*, the *Dreadnought*, and *Orion* too,
Defiance and *Bellerophon* soon made the French to rue ;
The *Spartiate* and *Thunderer* so sweetly played a tune,
Defence and *Leviathan* made them haul their colours down.

Now our shot flew like hail, while the guns did roar,
And thousands stood viewing us on the Spanish shore ;
They thought us to conquer, but our Tars said nay,
Your national colours shall be hauled down this day.

Come listen, bold Britons, and quickly I'll unfold
A lamentable story as ever yet was told,
Gallant Nelson so brave, for 's achievements renown'd,
Fell a victim that day, but with glory was crown'd.

Now their ships so enclos'd by the bold British fleet,
Who always went like lions their enemies to meet,
They could not withstand and for quarters did roar,
Saying, Britons, we've struck for to fight no more.

Then twenty-one sail of the line we took that day,
And one more we burn'd, and the rest got away ;
Being close in with their shore and beginning to blow,
Our ships were so disabled we could not chase the foe.

Now our fleet one and all away they did sail,
With twenty-one of the enemy's ships at our tail.
The King of Spain and Bonaparte together may weep,
For the flow'r of both nations we sunk in the deep.

Then on the twenty-second, the gale increas'd so fast,
Our prizes were not able to rigg out jury masts;
Besides they were so leaky we could not keep them free,
So our Admiral made a signal to sink them in the sea.

The pris'ners we took out, five sail we sunk that day,
The rest we kept in tow for to bring them away;
But after all our trouble, it griev'd our hearts full sore,
Three of our captur'd ships lay on the Spanish shore.

Then on the twenty-third, about three in the afternoon,
Saw the remainder of our enemy, and on them bore down
To bring them to action, they seem'd to say from far,
We think we have got enough while off Trafalgar.

Then the wind being fair, they soon put into port,
Or our tars again would have shown them British sport,
Ran under their batteries, and there they brought too,
Loudly crying, British Devils, we're clear of you now.

Then we stood off all night, and part of the next day,
When most of our captured to leeward of us lay,
Then seven of our shipping upon them bore down,
Says our Captain, brave boys, we'll make sure of our own.

We brought them to anchor, our own ships likewise,
We bore to the Northward, each had charge of a prize,
The weather had continued, 'twas our Admiral's desire,
The prisoners to save and their ships to set on fire.

Three we burnt, six more sunk, which just made up eighteen,
Four we carried to Gibraltar to lie there till the Spring,
We moor'd them in the Mole, and there they quietly lay,
When most of our disabled ships for England bore away.

So now we're bound for England after this victory,
Six sail we left off Cadiz for to watch our Enemy,
Prince, *Spencer*, and *Canopus*, *Tygar*, *Donagal* and *Queen*,
Swears that if they do come out they'll ne'er go in again.

A health to Admiral Collingwood, he's a valiant man,
To the Captains of the fleet, we'll toast them every one ;
To his officers and seamen, who ne'er refus'd to stand,
To fight for their country while Nelson gave command.

But now Lord Nelson's no more, it grieves me for to say
And he always liv'd victorious until that very day ;
For on that great and glorious day it was his lot to fall,
But his mem'ry shall be ever dear to British sailors all.

So now for to conclude and finish my new song,
I'm but a saucy foremast Jack, and to the *Defence* belong ;
A health I'll drink to Captain Hope, to all his officers too,
Likewise to all his seamen, ever loyal, bold and true.

So now my song is finish'd, I hope each Tar will smile,
And pray for peace and plenty to bless the British Isle.
Here's a health to George our King, and long may he reign,
While the hardy Tars of Britain are masters of the main.

NELSON'S GLORIOUS VICTORY

(From ' Great Nelson's Laurels,' published by J. Pitts, Seven Dials. 1d.)

Come, all you gallant heroes, and listen unto me,
While I relate a battle was lately fought at sea,
So fierce and hot on every side as plainly it appears
There has not been such a battle fought for many years.

Brave Nelson and brave Collingwood off Cadiz harbour lay,
Watching the French and Spaniards to show them English play.
The nineteenth of October from the Bay they did set sail,
Brave Nelson got intelligence and soon was at their tail.

It was on the twenty-first, my boys, we had them clear in sight,
And on that very day at noon began the bloody fight,
Our fleet forming two columns we broke the enemy's line,
To spare the use of signals was Nelson's bold design.

But now the voice of thunder is heard on every side,
The briny waves like crimson with human blood was dy'd,
The French and Spanish heroes their courage well did show,
But our brave British sailors soon brought their colours low.

For four hours and ten minutes this battle it did hold,
And on the briny ocean men never fought more bold,
But on the point of victory brave Nelson he was slain;
And on the minds of Britons his death will long remain.

Nineteen sail of the enemy's were taken and destroy'd,
You see the rage of Britains is not to be [annoy'd].
And ages yet unborn will have this story for to tell,
The twenty-first of October our gallant Nelson fell.

I hope the wives and children will quickly find relief,
For the loss of those brave heroes their hearts filled with grief,
And may our warlike officers aspire to such fame,
And avenge the death of Nelson while we record his name.

THE DEATH OF NELSON

By S. J. ARNOLD

From the Opera of 'The Americans'

'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay
We saw the Frenchmen lay,
  Each heart was bounding then;
We scorn'd the foreign yoke,
Our ships were British oak,
  Hearts of oak our men.
Our Nelson mark'd them on the wave,
Three cheers our gallant seamen gave,
  Nor thought of home or beauty;
Along the line the signal ran:—
'England expects that every man
  This day will do his duty.'

And now the cannon roar
Along the affrighted shore;
  Our Nelson led the way.
His ship the *Vict'ry* named,
Long be that *Vict'ry* famed,
  For vict'ry crowned the day.
But dearly was that conquest bought,
Too well the gallant hero fought
  For England, home, and beauty;
He cried, as 'midst the fire he ran,
'England expects that every man
  This day will do his duty.'

At last the fatal wound,
Which spread dismay around,
  The hero's breast received;
'Heaven fights on our side,
The day's our own,' he cried;
  'Now long enough I've lived;
In honour's cause my life was passed,
In honour's cause I fell at last,
  For England, home, and beauty.'
Thus ending life as he began,
England confess'd that every man
  That day had done his duty.

THE DEATH OF NELSON

By CHARLES DIBDIN THE ELDER

Be the great twenty-first of October recorded,
In the mem'rable year eighteen hundred and five
May each hero that fell his true praise be awarded
While one single oak on this isle shall survive.
Nelson led the gallant van!
Nelson France and Spain defied;
Nelson spoke—the fight began;
Nelson, matchless hero! died.
Commemorate this first of men!
Hang laurels on the cypress-bough!
Each Briton did his duty then—
Let Britons do their duty now!

The bold *Royal Sovereign*, with best satisfaction,
The admiring fleet saw all others outstrip!
Cried our hero, 'How gallantly first into action
That fine fellow, Collingwood, carries his ship!'
And now the Spanish line was broke;
Destruction all around was hurl'd;
The *Vict'ry's* fire involved in smoke
The largest ship in all the world;
The British lion left his den;
And from the taffrail to the prow
Each Briton did his duty then—
Let Britons do their duty now!

Ne'er with such fatal fury did devastation rattle!
Yards, masts, and rigging, reeling hulls, and every hold,
Felt English vengeance, as, through this dreadful battle,
Our murd'rous doubleshotted broadsides told.
At length a cloud involved the day!—
A cloud that might to all impart
Dread fear, could Britons know dismay—
A bullet reach'd our hero's heart!
And now the battle raged again;
Revenge was seated on each brow:
Each Briton did his duty then—
Let Britons do their duty now!

Fierce rage and noble vengeance each bosom inspiring,
Dress'd out in grisly terrors, pervaded the decks;
And while the wondering Fates were each hero admiring,
Eighteen crippled vessels were little more than wrecks.
And now, from friends and country torn,
Great Nelson's spirit takes its way,
On wings of fame and glory borne
To mansions of eternal day!
Commemorate this first of men!
Hang laurels on the cypress-bough;
Each Briton did his duty then—
Let Britons do their duty now!

THE ARRIVAL OF NELSON'S CORPSE

By CHARLES DIBDIN THE ELDER

Ah, hark! the signals round the coast
  Proclaim the great event
That gave all hearts to grieve and boast,
  To joy and to lament.
Great Nelson's corse arrives in sight,
  Victorious e'en in death;
Who, living, did his country right,
  Who, dying, gave her breath.

For did not fame the tidings tell
  That laid him on his bier,
The foe whom nothing could repel,
  Had ventured to come here:
But now may peace, that balm devout,
  Be laid to every breast;
His mighty deeds have fear and doubt
  For ever set at rest!

THE BRAVE OLD *TÉMÉRAIRE*

By J. DUFF

Behold! how changed is yonder ship,
The wreck of former pride;
Methinks I see her as of old,
The glory of the tide!
As when she came to Nelson's aid
The battle's brunt to bear,
And nobly sought to lead the van,
The brave old *Téméraire.*

When sailors speak of Trafalgar,
So famed for Nelson's fight,
With pride they tell of her career
Her onward course, her might
How, when the victory was won,
She shone triumphant there,
With noble prize on either side,
The brave old *Téméraire.*

Our friends depart and are forgot
As time rolls fleetly by;
In after years none, none are left
For them to heave a sigh;
But hist'ry's page will ever mark
The glories she did share,
And gild the sunset of her fate,
The brave old *Téméraire.*

From

THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR:

A Poem in Six Cantos (1833)

Canto VI

III

Still is the air;—our guns with awful roar
Vibrate from ocean to the frighted shore;
All Spain returns th' incessant echoing sounds,
And British thunder through the deep resounds.
Alone brave Collingwood the power defies
Of Alva's force, though hosts against him rise;—
On Santa Anna he his thunders pours,
Throughout the fleet that echoing thunder roars:
Alone the foe's worst fury he withstands,—
Calmly directs, and skilfully commands.
Assailed by numbers, still his post he holds,
Undaunted zeal, sagacious skill unfolds,—
Alone; for borne before propitious gales,
His ship all others of his line outsails.
Nelson beholds his progress with delight,
And points him out the foremost in the fight.

XII

Closely, more closely still the vessels join,
Shock the tall prows, and friends and foes combine;
There Nelson still, his squadron's surest guide,
Flames in the van, and strews with wrecks the tide;

There still brave Collingwood the fight maintains,
And the fierce fury of the foe sustains.
Rotherham and Clavell by his side appear,—
Duff there is seen, Conn thunders in the rear;
On either side more loud the turmoil grows,
Peal answers peal, and blows succeed to blows;
Havock and ruin over all prevail,
And either fleet with hostile rage assail.

XIX

Thus warred the raging chiefs, thus battle's cry,
Rung through the deep, re-echoed to the sky;
Cooke in *Bellerophon* distains the tides
With hostile blood, and the foe's lines divides;
Berry with thundering sound supports the war,
His bold exertions echo bears afar.
No fears, no timid, no unmanly deed,
Through that fine fleet th' observing eye might read;
All was excitement, all were greatly brave,
Who now in action thronged the liquid wave.
Orion thunders on the watery plain;
The gallant Codrington, her chief, to gain
Immortal praise aspires. Prowse shakes the shores,
Tyler, on *Tonnant*, fury round him pours;
Whilst glorious Collingwood, with spirit brave,
Whelms the foe's wrecks beneath the briny wave.
Th' astonished foe each British hero viewed,
Claim the entire dominion of the flood.

XX

Hark! yonder shout, borne by the gladdening breeze,
O'er the extent of Cadiz' labouring seas,—
Villemarin strikes, Villemarin owns the power
Of Britain's forces in this awful hour!

Cagigal likewise yields, and Camas' course
Is checked by Hargood's overwhelming force!
Yet thy sons, Britain, in this arduous strife,
Deplored the loss of many a valued life;
Duff now is fallen; Cooke, in this dread hour,
Now slept in death, to be inspired no more
With war's loud shout, or echoing cannon's roar;
With painful wounds was gallant Tyler torn;
Norris, disabled, from the deck was borne;
Moorsom, Laforey, Durham, seamed with scars,
Showed how they fought, how graced the British wars.

LINES TO VICE-ADMIRAL SIR THOMAS MASTERMAN HARDY, G.C.B.,

GOVERNOR OF GREENWICH HOSPITAL, 1836

BY 'L. E L.' (MISS LANDON, AFTERWARDS MRS. MACLEAN)

SILENCE is now upon the seas,
The silent seas of yore;
The thunder of the cannonade
Awakes the wave no more.

The battle-flag droops o'er the mast,
There quiet let it sleep;
For it hath won in wilder hours
Its empire o'er the deep.

Now let it wave above their home,
Of those who fought afar;
The victors of the Baltic Sea,
The brave of Trafalgar.

Upon a terrace by the Thames,
I saw the Admiral stand;
He who received the latest clasp
Of Nelson's dying hand.

Age, toil and care had somewhat bowed
His bearing proud and high;
But yet resolve was on his lip,
And fire was in his eye.

I felt no wonder England holds
  Dominion o'er the seas :
Still the red cross will face the world,
  While she hath men like these.

And gathered there beneath the sun
  Were loitering veterans old ;
As if of former victories
  And former days they told.

No prouder trophy hath our Isle,
  Though proud her trophies be,
Than that old Palace where are housed
  The veterans of the sea.

Her other domes—her wealth, her pride,
  Her science may declare ;
But Greenwich hath the noblest claim—
  Her gratitude is there.

THE OLD *SUPERB*

(Published in *The Spectator*, February 20, 1904)

The wind was rising easterly, the morning sky was blue,
The Straits before us opened wide and free;
We looked towards the Admiral, where high the Peter flew,
And all our hearts were dancing like the sea.
'The French are gone to Martinique with four-and-twenty sail!
The Old *Superb* is old and foul and slow,
But the French are gone to Martinique, and Nelson's on the trail,
And where he goes the Old *Superb* must go!'

So Westward ho! for Trinidad and Eastward ho! for Spain,
And 'Ship ahoy!' a hundred times a day;
Round the world if need be, and round the world again,
With a lame duck lagging all the way!

The Old *Superb* was barnacled and green as grass below,
Her sticks were only fit for stirring grog;
The pride of all her midshipmen was silent long ago,
And long ago they ceased to heave the log.
Four year out from home she was, and ne'er a week in port,
And nothing save the guns aboard her bright;
But Captain Keats he knew the game, and swore to share the sport,
For he never yet came in too late to fight.

So Westward ho! for Trinidad and Eastward ho! for
Spain,
And 'Ship ahoy!' a hundred times a day;
Round the world if need be, and round the world again,
With a lame duck lagging all the way!

'Now up, my lads!' the Captain cried, 'for sure the case
were hard
If longest out were first to fall behind.
Aloft, aloft with studding sails, and lash them on the yard,
For night and day the Trades are driving blind!'
So all day long and all day long behind the fleet we crept,
And how we fretted none but Nelson guessed;
But every night the Old *Superb* she sailed when others slept,
Till we ran the French to earth with all the rest!

Oh, 'twas Westward ho! for Trinidad and Eastward
ho! for Spain,
And 'Ship ahoy!' a hundred times a day;
Round the world if need be, and round the world again,
With a lame duck lagging all the way!

THE QUARTER-GUNNER'S YARN

(From 'The Island Race,' 1898. Founded on fragmentary lines of an old song communicated to the writer by the late Admiral Sir Windham Phipps Hornby, who served under Hardy in 1827)

We lay at St. Helen's, and easy she rode
With one anchor catted and freshwater stowed;
When the barge came alongside like bullocks we roared,
For we knew what we carried with Nelson aboard.

Our Captain was Hardy, the pride of us all,
I'll ask for none better when danger shall call;
He was hardy by nature and Hardy by name,
And soon by his conduct to honour he came.

The third day the Lizard was under our lee,
Where the *Ajax* and *Thunderer* joined us at sea,
But what with foul weather and tacking about,
When we sighted the Fleet we were thirteen days out.

The Captains they all came aboard quick enough,
But the news that they brought was as heavy as duff;
So backward an enemy never was seen,
They were harder to come at than Cheeks the Marine.

The lubbers had hare's lugs where seamen have ears,
So we stowed all saluting and smothered our cheers,
And to humour their stomachs and tempt them to dine,
In the offing we showed them but six of the line.

One morning the topmen reported below
The old *Agamemnon* escaped from the foe.
Says Nelson : ' My lads, there'll be honour for some,
For we're sure of a battle now Berry has come.'

' Up hammocks !' at last cried the bo'sun at dawn ;
The guns were cast loose and the tompions drawn ;
The gunner was bustling the shotracks to fill,
And ' All hands to quarters !' was piped with a will.

We now saw the enemy bearing ahead,
And to East of them Cape Traflagar it was said ;
'Tis a name we remember from father to son,
That the days of old England may never be done.

The *Victory* led, to her flag it was due,
Tho' the *Téméraires* thought themselves Admirals too ;
But Lord Nelson he hailed them with masterful grace :
' Cap'n Harvey, I'll thank you to keep in your place.'

To begin with we closed the *Bucentaure* alone,
An eighty-gun ship and their Admiral's own ;
We raked her but once, and the rest of the day
Like a hospital hulk on the water she lay.

To our battering next the *Redoutable* struck,
But her sharpshooters gave us the worst of the luck :
Lord Nelson was wounded, most cruel to tell.
' They've done for me, Hardy !' he cried as he fell.

To the cockpit in silence they carried him past,
And sad were the looks that were after him cast ;
His face with a kerchief he tried to conceal,
But we knew him too well from the truck to the keel.

When the Captain reported a victory won,
'Thank God!' he kept saying, 'my duty I've done.'
At last came the moment to kiss him good-bye,
And the Captain for once had the salt in his eye.

'Now anchor, dear Hardy,' the Admiral cried;
But before we could make it he fainted and died.
All night in the trough of the sea we were tossed,
And for want of ground tackle good prizes were lost.

Then we hauled down the flag, at the fore it was red,
And blue at the mizzen was hoisted instead
By Nelson's famed Captain, the pride of each tar,
Who fought in the *Victory* off Cape Traflagar.

THE FIGHTING *TÉMÉRAIRE*

(From 'Admirals All,' 1897)

It was eight bells ringing,
For the morning watch was done,
And the gunner's lads were singing,
As they polished every gun.
It was eight bells ringing,
And the gunner's lads were singing,
For the ship she rode a-swinging,
As they polished every gun.

Oh! to see the linstock lighting,
Téméraire! Téméraire!
Oh! to hear the round shot biting,
Téméraire! Téméraire!
Oh! to see the linstock lighting,
And to hear the round shot biting,
For we're all in love with fighting
On the Fighting Téméraire.

It was noontide ringing,
And the battle just begun,
When the ship her way was winging,
As they loaded every gun.
It was noontide ringing
When the ship her way was winging,
And the gunner's lads were singing
As they loaded every gun.

There'll be many grim and gory,
Téméraire ! Téméraire !
There'll be few to tell the story,
Téméraire ! Téméraire !
There'll be many grim and gory,
There'll be few to tell the story,
But we'll all be one in glory
With the Fighting Téméraire.

There's a far bell ringing,
At the setting of the sun,
And a phantom voice is singing
Of the great days done.
There's a far bell ringing,
And a phantom voice is singing
Of renown for ever clinging
To the great days done.

Now the sunset breezes shiver,
Téméraire ! Téméraire !
And she's fading down the river,
Téméraire ! Téméraire !
Now the sunset breezes shiver,
And she's fading down the river,
But in England's song for ever
She's the Fighting Téméraire.

NORTHUMBERLAND

(From 'The Sailing of the Long-Ships,' 1902)

When England sets her banner forth,
And bids her armour shine,
She'll not forget the famous North,
The lads of moor and Tyne;
And when the loving-cup's in hand
And Honour leads the cry,
They know not old Northumberland
Who'll pass her memory by.

When Nelson sailed for Trafalgar
With all his country's best,
He held them dear as brothers are,
But one beyond the rest.
For when the fleet with heroes manned
To clear the decks began,
The boast of old Northumberland
He sent to lead the van.

Himself by *Victory's* bulwark stood
And cheered to see the sight;
'That noble fellow Collingwood,
How bold he goes to fight!'
Love, that the league of ocean spanned,
Heard him as face to face;
'What would he give, Northumberland,
To share our pride of place?'

The flag that goes the world around
  And flaps on every breeze
Has never gladdened fairer ground
  Or kinder hearts than these.
So when the loving-cup's in hand
  And Honour leads the cry,
They know not old Northumberland
  Who'll pass her memory by.

THE NIGHT OF TRAFALGAR

(Boatman's Song, reprinted by kind permission from 'The Dynasts,' (1904,) by THOMAS HARDY)

I

In the wild October night-time, when the wind raved round the land,
And the Back-Sea met the Front-Sea, and our doors were blocked with sand,
And we heard the drub of Dead-man's Bay, where bones of thousands are,
We knew not what the day had done for us at Trafalgar.
(*All*) Had done,
Had done,
For us at Trafalgar!

II

'Pull hard, and make the Nothe, or down we go!' one says, says he.
We pulled; and bedtime brought the storm; but snug at home slept we.
Yet all the while our gallants after fighting through the day
Were beating up and down the dark, sou'-west of Cadiz Bay.
(*All*) The dark,
The dark,
Sou'-west of Cadiz Bay!

III

The victors and the vanquished then the storm it tossed
and tore,
As hard they strove, those worn-out men, upon that surly
shore;
Dead Nelson and his half-dead crew, his foes from near and
far,
Were rolled together on the deep that night at Trafalgar.

(*All*) The deep,
The deep,
That night at Trafalgar!

FOR A TRAFALGAR CENOTAPH

(From 'The Island Race,' 1898)

Lover of England, stand awhile and gaze
With thankful heart, and lips refrained from praise:
They rest beyond the speech of human pride
Who served with Nelson and with Nelson died.

THE LAST THREE FROM TRAFALGAR

AT THE ANNIVERSARY BANQUET, OCTOBER 21, 187*

(From D. G. Rossetti's Collected Works, by kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. Ellis and Elvey)

In grappled ships around the *Victory*,
Three boys did England's Duty with stout cheer,
While one dread truth was kept from every ear,
More dire than deafening fire that churned the sea:
For in the flag-ship's weltering cockpit, he
Who was the Battle's Heart without a peer,
He who had seen all fearful sights save Fear,
Was passing from all life save Victory.

And round the old memorial board to-day,
Three graybeards—each a war-worn British Tar—
View through the mist of years that hour afar:
Who soon shall greet, 'mid memories of fierce fray,
The impassioned soul which on its radiant way
Soared through the fiery cloud of Trafalgar.

THE HUNDREDTH YEAR

'Drake, and Blake, and Nelson's mighty name.'

THE stars were faint in heaven
That saw the Old Year die;
The dream-white mist of Devon
Shut in the seaward sky:
Before the dawn's unveiling
I heard three voices hailing,
I saw three ships come sailing
With lanterns gleaming high.

The first he cried defiance—
A full-mouthed voice and bold—
'On God be our reliance,
Our hope the Spaniard's gold!
With a still, stern ambuscado,
With a roaring escalado,
We'll sack their Eldorado
And storm their dungeon hold!'

Then slowly spake the second—
A great sad voice and deep—
'When all your gold is reckoned,
There is but this to keep:
To stay the foe from fooling,
To learn the heathen schooling,
To live and die sea-ruling,
And home at last to sleep.'

But the third matched in beauty
  The dawn that flushed afar;
'O sons of England, Duty
  Is England's morning star:
Then Fame's eternal splendour
Be theirs who well defend her,
And theirs who fain would bend her
  The night of Trafalgar!'

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